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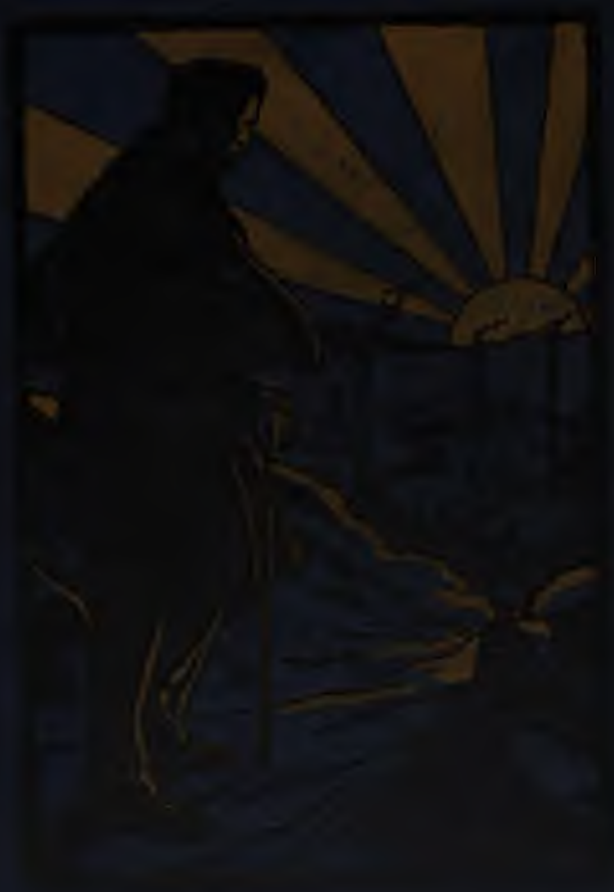
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# BEHOLD THE DAYS COME



THE DOCTOR AND REV.  
JAMES ADDERLEY

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# BEHOLD THE DAYS COME

A FANCY IN CHRISTIAN POLITICS

BY

JAMES ADDERLEY

AUTHOR OF "STEPHEN REMARK"; "FRANCIS, THE LITTLE POOR MAN"  
"MONSIEUR VINCENT"; "A NEW EARTH," ETC.

THAT WHICH IS SAID WITHOUT LOVE CAN NEVER BE WHOLLY TRUE  
NOR IS ANYTHING WHOLLY FALSE WHICH IS SAID WITH IT

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*First Published in 1907*

**DEDICATED**  
**TO MY OLD FRIEND AND FELLOW CULDESMAN**  
**STEWART HEADLAM**  
**WHO THROUGH EVIL REPORT AND GOOD REPORT**  
**HAS PROPERED**  
**IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**  
**FOR THIRTY YEARS**  
**TO THE CHURCH OF THIS COUNTRY**  
**AND WHO WITH UNIQUE FAITH AND DEEP URGENCY**  
**FOUNDED THE FIRST SOCIALIST SOCIETY**  
**IN MODERN ENGLAND**  
**ON THE BASIS OF THE CATHOLIC**  
**RELIGION**

. . . . You see deeper? Thus saw he,  
And by the light he saw, must walk : how else  
Was he to do his part? a man's, with might  
And main, and not a faintest touch of fear,  
Sure he was in the hand of God who comes  
Before and after, with a work to do  
Which no man helps nor hinders. Thus the man,—  
So timid when the business was to touch  
The uncertain order of humanity,  
Imperil, for a problematic cure  
Of grievance on the surface, any good  
I' the deep of things, dim yet discernible—  
This same man, so irresolute before,  
Show him a true excrescence to cut sheer,  
A devil's-graft on God's foundation-stock,  
Then—no complaint of indecision more!  
He wrenched out the whole canker, root and branch,  
Deaf to who cried that earth would tumble in  
At its four corners if he touched a twig.

ROBERT BROWNING

# CONTENTS

## BOOK I

	CHAPTER I	PAGE
THE MARBLE ARCH . . . . .		1
	CHAPTER II	
ST. MARTIN'S MISSIOM . . . . .		21
	CHAPTER III	
ON PARADE . . . . .		35
	CHAPTER IV	
GOOD COPY . . . . .		44
	CHAPTER V	
VOX DEI . . . . .		54
	CHAPTER VI	
FENWICK . . . . .		65
	CHAPTER VII	
A PLOT . . . . .		71
	CHAPTER VIII	
CHRISTMAS . . . . .		81
	CHAPTER IX	
BETHLEHEM . . . . .		90
	CHAPTER X	
SPIKENARD . . . . .		101
	CHAPTER XI	
BUNKS . . . . .		109
	CHAPTER XII	
THE BATTLE . . . . .		119

## BOOK II

		PAGE
	CHAPTER I	
TO THE COUNTRY . . . . .		136
	CHAPTER II	
VERSUS SAUSAGES . . . . .		144
	CHAPTER III	
DUKERY SQUARE . . . . .		151
	CHAPTER IV	
SWAMPTON . . . . .		162
	CHAPTER V	
LORDS AND COMMONS . . . . .		173
	CHAPTER VI	
A MISSION . . . . .		180
	CHAPTER VII	
IN EXTREMIS . . . . .		190
	CHAPTER VIII	
NEWS FROM LONDON . . . . .		199
	CHAPTER IX	
THE EDITOR'S CHAIR . . . . .		207
	CHAPTER X	
A GARDEN CITY . . . . .		213
	CHAPTER XI	
THE REVOLUTION . . . . .		221
	CHAPTER XII	
TWO LETTERS . . . . .		228
	CHAPTER XIII	
GOD BE WITH YOU . . . . .		237

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

**I** AM obliged to write a Preface to this in order to anticipate the reviewers, who will say, as they have said before, "This is a bad novel". The last time I published a story of this kind I was implored by one reviewer never to write again. Now he would not have said that, had he realised that he was not reviewing a novel but a tract. So I say again, as I have said before,

### THIS IS A TRACT, NOT A NOVEL.

But this does not mean that it deals with little choir-boys who steal apples, and then get consumption and repent on the advice of a district visitor. Nor will it tell you why that notorious burglar William Sikes, after he was caught picking the lock of the Churchwarden's till, was forgiven by the Rector and took to going to church, where he is now to be seen taking round the bag. Nor will it relate how a ritualistic priest met an old lady in a railway carriage, heard from her for the first time in his life what it was to be a Christian, then married her and became a happy widower at Brixton.

Yet for all this you will find my tract a rather serious one—serious, just because it is so ordinary. It will tell of very ordinary people, more ordinary really than the aforesaid choir-boys and burglars. And they will talk quite ordinary language. That's where I am no novelist.



I cannot make the aristocracy talk in epigrams. I was born in Belgravia and I have lived in Mayfair. I never heard an epigram yet, except, perhaps, from a cabman. You will find my ladies and gentlemen just doing and saying what they are doing and saying every day—at least it was what they did and said about six months ago. They may have changed already; and of course I only speak for those I know, and I don't know everybody.

Now, who will read my tract? Everybody, I hope—whom I don't know. By the way, I suffer from the receipt of anonymous letters. As the Irishman said, "Will you kindly sign your name to the next anonymous letter?" Anyhow, I don't mind signing my name and giving you my address.

JAMES ADDERLEY

SALTLEY, BIRMINGHAM

P.S.—To prevent mistakes, kindly remember that all the bad clergymen in this tract are myself.

# BEHOLD THE DAYS COME

## Book I

### CHAPTER I

#### THE MARBLE ARCH

Ours the shame to understand  
That the World prefers the lie,  
That with medicine in her hand  
She *will* sink and choose to die.

Ours the agonizing sense  
Of the Heaven the Earth might be,  
If from blank indifference  
Men woke one hour and felt as we.

LORD HOUGHTON

**H**AVE you ever been to Hyde Park on a Sunday? If you are a convinced Christian with tender, reverent feelings, you must be prepared for a shock. At one corner near the Marble Arch you will hear the Atheists and other curious persons lecturing, at another you will come across the aristocracy and the plutocracy at their church parade. Both are somewhat trying to the temper of one who likes a peaceful Sunday wherein he can rest and meditate on God.

The Marble Arch corner resembles the betting ring at Epsom more than anything else. The noise is deafening. Erect on little stools or chairs, a few yards apart from each other, men stand and shout, gambling with their creeds. Here is Mr. Garble, who, for two long hours at a stretch, on the Sundays when he is not in prison for creating a

disturbance, regales the mob with stories of monks of the Middle Ages who lived in continuous contempt of the Decalogue.

Here also is Mr. Michael Mazzoni, who, with an Italian name and a German accent, preaches the religion of "Humanitarian Deism" and fulminates against the "Christian's Idol of a Personal God." There is the man whom the crowd call the "Little Horn," who can tell you the day of the month and year when the end of the world will come, and who is quite sure that Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman is the Beast.

But out of this strange unchristian medley the Spirit often works His wonders. The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

It was thus on a Sunday in May in the early decades of the twentieth century when Vincent Heathcote accompanied his father to the weekly meeting of the National Secularist Socialist League. The N.S.S.L. was a society banded together to further the establishment of a socialist state in England on secularist lines. The elder Heathcote, called John Baptist by his good mother when she carried him to be admitted at baptism into the Christian society which he had since repudiated, was a fine-looking man of over forty years. He had been born and reared in a little country village in Swampshire, but the dulness of rural life had driven him with most of his young male companions to the town shortly after his course at school had ended.

But this was not before his keen intellect had caused him to chafe at the stupid otherworldliness of the chapel minister and the amiable platitudes which did duty for sermons at the old parish church. Christianity, as presented by its official representatives in Greenside, seemed to the ardent John Baptist too much aloof from human life to be of any use to him or to any practical man. He

simply brushed it aside the moment that he found himself able to shirk Sunday-school without being beaten by his father. He had listened to the lecturers who came round in the vans of the Land Restoration League and pointed out the obvious facts that the rural labourers were miserably paid, and that the park of three hundred acres occupied by an American millionaire, who had bought it from the young squire, might be more profitably worked if owned by the people instead of being left uncultivated.

There were many other social disgraces even in the little village of Greenside, let alone those of the neighbouring towns, the knowledge of which entered not only into the brain but into the heart and conscience of young Heathcote. Yet nothing was ever suggested as a remedy by the Christians of the place. They seemed to him to be eminently contented with their present lot, and yet to be continually singing about a bright "Home" hereafter to which they hoped to come. What wonder was it that when he left home he carried with him no feelings of affection for the old religion! The one good thing in Christianity of which he knew was the love of his mother for himself. But he might be pardoned for supposing that this was due to her human nature rather than any special result of her Bible reading or her Communions. Even she sometimes rubbed him up the wrong way when she told him of an everlasting hell which would certainly be his if he did not mind what the parson said. He was only seventeen years old when he said to his mother one day :—

"It's by minding what the parson says that these poor people are already living in hell. He speaks to them of a future Home made of pearls and gold, and they don't mind living in a present so-called Home of slime and mud. They have got no proper water to drink and no proper houses to live in; they cannot get milk when they want it,

though the cows are in the next field. It all goes to Swampton to be mixed with water and sold to another set of psalm-singing idiots there. They have no land to cultivate, because the man at the big house wants to keep his grounds quiet that he may rear tame pheasants, and then shoot them in the autumn to please himself and his friends. The public-house is the only drawing-room they have got, though the parson has two rooms, one for dining in and one which he calls his drawing-room. Yet he tells them to do to others as they would be done by. Why doesn't he begin by doing it himself? I tell you, mother, they are in hell now. But it shan't be 'everlasting' if I can help it. When I get to Swampton I shall be a Socialist, and I shan't bother myself about religion unless it is to preach against it!"

He kept his word about this. When he got to Swampton he worked as a printer. There he learnt much about Socialism, for they printed a Socialist newspaper called the *Vox Populi* at his office, and one of the candidates for Parliament was Bob Browning, the President of the National Secularist Socialist League, who hoped to get into the House of Commons at the next election. But this was in the days when Socialism was unpopular, and the "Labour Party," as we know it now, had hardly come into being. He was not further drawn towards Christianity by the fact that Swampton was a cathedral town, providing a daily superfluity of double chants for the edification of old ladies, and proportionately sleepy in the matter of practical religion.

Here we will leave for the present the biography of Heathcote senior, informing our readers of this only in addition, that he was now the most prominent member of the League and the Editor of *Vox Populi*: that while his knowledge of Socialism had increased, yet his dislike of Christianity had not been overcome. In fact, he was

called an Atheist, though it is only fair to him to add that he did not deny that there might be a God. On that particular afternoon in Hyde Park he was down to lecture on "*Why Socialism must be Secularist.*"

And now for a word about Vincent, before we come to the story of what happened in the Park.

He was a young man of about twenty years, resembling his father in outward appearance and sharpness of intellect, and inheriting from his good grandmother a great reverence for truth and charity. He had been educated at a first-rate grammar school, where he had taken numberless prizes and scholarships, and was now looking forward to a course at a German university, his father having an idea that if he stayed in England he might become infected with the virus of Christianity. Calling himself a "free-thinker" his father had taken every precaution lest his boy should think freely on any subject, least of all upon religion. He had been primed up with all the stock arguments against the faith and never allowed to read what was written on the other side. He had been withdrawn from religious instruction at school, and when quite a child had been taught in the Sunday-school of the National Secularist Socialist League. There he had been taught "ethics without religion" by means of stories, true and otherwise, in which the Christian minister generally figured as an inhuman wretch, who was apparently incapable of the most ordinary moral actions, such as giving a glass of water to a thirsty person.

He had been taken by his father to Trafalgar Square to shout with two thousand other little secularists, "Down with the parsons whether Church or Chapel!"

When introduced to the many Socialist friends of his father's who were professing Christians, he was always reminded that religion had nothing to do with Socialism, and that these gentlemen were, so far as they were Chris-

tians, the victims of an effete superstition due to their environment, and that they would probably get over it soon as people get over an attack of rheumatism.

But in spite of his father's efforts Vincent had managed to do a large amount of real free-thinking on his own. He was a voracious reader of history and had an acutely critical mind. Even the translations of sceptical books, which his father allowed him to read, revealed to him that really learned men cannot treat religion as if it were of no account. It must be confessed that, in spite of his admiration for his father, he sometimes felt when he heard him lecture about religion that his worthy parent was talking of what he did not understand. He talked a great deal about science and the process of evolution, but he steadily ignored it when speaking of the Bible. He found fault with Moses because his morals were not the same as St. John's, and tried to saddle the Christians of the twentieth century with all the crude ideas of the Israelites, and the cruelties of some of their brethren in the Middle Ages.

Evolution was not allowed to be reckoned with when Christianity was in question except to cast ridicule on some old-fashioned Christians who, like other old-fashioned grocers or dukes or coalheavers, could not readily accept what seemed to them a new doctrine.

His father did not seem to him to have found a very logical basis for his unbelief. He appeared inconsistent even in his criticisms. One week in Hyde Park he would assert that the Apostles were fools, who imagined that they saw the miracles of Christ ; another week he would say that they were clever deceivers, who committed a pre-concerted fraud upon their hearers ; while another week he would gravely declare that all scholars now agreed that Christianity was merely a *réchauffé* of ancient Buddhist myths dished up in the second century. Vincent thought this

unfair, and sometimes told his father so. "All's fair in love and war," replied his father, "and it's your business and mine to make war on this cursed superstition which is keeping back the social revolution."

"But, dear father," said Vincent, "how is it you know so much about Christians and their evil ways if you never go to church, or mix up with them in any way? Is it not possible that Christians may have advanced a little like everybody else since the days of your old parson at Greenside? And have not some Christians done a great deal for the social revolution already? You told me not to read *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, but I disobeyed you. I believe that parson Charles Kingsley did something in his day which made it possible for us to do what we are doing now. And how about Carlyle and Ruskin, whose books you do let me read? They have a good deal to say about God and religion. They seem, at any rate, to have believed that it was very necessary to social reform."

"My dear boy, those men were freaks." ("Freak" was a favourite term of Heathcote's.) "They would have been ten times better if they had not been religious. Moreover they were not orthodox. Carlyle was not a Christian really, and Ruskin, like me, could not abide parsons."

"Still they loved the Bible which you try to make fun of, and they believed a jolly sight more than you do, and I cannot think they would agree with your secularism which you preach. Some day I shall inquire more into this Christian Socialism and I dare say I shall change my mind."

"It's all confounded humbug," said Heathcote. "It is quite true there are some parsons who think they are Socialists, but they are not out-and-out men like you and me. Don't waste your time over them."

But he did waste his time, and this is how it began.

Heathcote's lecture was timed to commence at three



o'clock. It was half-past one when he and his son arrived at the Marble Arch. They strolled round the Park and found themselves in the thick of the "Church Parade."

"There you are," said the father, "that's your modern Christianity. Do you see those people with Prayer Books in their hands? They have been to church to worship Christ, and that's the beginning and the end of their religion. Some of them have not even done that. They have only come out to see their friends, and have a talk about the latest Society scandal before they go home to a big luncheon party. This is what is called the cream of 'Society' or the 'Smart Set.'"

"The cheek they have in calling it 'Society'! 'Society,' to my mind, is the great human brotherhood of the masses of working people, the vast majority of the nation. These are a small minority of idle blood-suckers who are living on rents squeezed out of the pockets of the poor, or money made by tempting the poor man to drink himself drunk. 'Society' indeed! It's a small fraction of humanity and a very vulgar fraction too!"

"I expect there is some Christian answer to that argument which I don't know," said Vincent.

"Of course there's a Christian answer. The parsons have got an answer to every difficulty, but it's an answer that won't hold water for a moment. The parsons would tell you that these people are 'doing a lot of good with their money,' because, forsooth, they give about one and a half per cent to some rotten charity. To begin with, we don't want charity, we want justice. And what's one and a half per cent when you're pocketing ten out of the labour of the people to whom you give your damned charity? Sometimes too they give us what they have won on a race or at a game of cards, doing us a double wrong by teaching us to gamble. The people are such fools. They think they're gentlemen if they do what these dogs do."

"But all Christians are not like these, and you yourself said that some of them had not been to church."

"That's true," said Heathcote, "but they represent a system which is rotten at the core. This huge apparatus of Capitalism is kept up in order to keep us down. And it's all mixed up with religion. I don't so much mind the Christianity of Christ, but His Christianity is not the popular religion. It is this popular Christianity which holds the field to-day and which has got to be exterminated."

"Then," said the boy, "why not attack Capitalism and modern caricatures of Christianity and leave the Bible alone? What harm is there in the Bible?"

"The Bible, like the curate's egg, is not so bad in parts, but we have got better books nowadays. I have written better books myself. Any weekly number of the *Vox* is better than what Paul wrote. It's too late to make people understand even the good parts of the Scripture. It is all so mixed up, bad and good, that the only thing to do is to abolish it altogether, root and branch."

"Father," said Vincent, "I can't argue with you. You are like Newman, of whom Kingsley said, 'I know I'm right, but he's too clever for me.'"

Heathcote smiled self-approvingly. In his inmost heart he was beginning to feel that his son was cleverer than he. It was a satisfaction to find that the boy thought it was the other way on.

Nevertheless, John Baptist Heathcote felt just a trifle nervous as he began his lecture that day. He felt he could no longer look upon his son as a pupil whose character he could mould as he chose. He felt that he was in the presence of one who, but for the great love and respect he bore for him, might prove himself a severe critic and might even make him look foolish to the crowd. This would have been a terrible humiliation, for John Baptist, as a rule, held his audience spell-bound, not so

much by eloquence as by a certain dogmatic manner which made them think there was no answer that could be given to any of his arguments. Like the proverbial Englishman he never knew when he was beaten. Nor had he often run the risk, for most of his Christian opponents in the Park were badly furnished with replies. Some were anti-Socialists who were out of sympathy with the multitude. They might have most convincing arguments as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, but if they let it be known that they were against the Labour party nobody would listen. Religion and Capitalism fell together and Heathcote triumphed. Others had no reply to give, but used the opportunity which Heathcote always gave them to denounce him as anti-Christ and to prophesy a specially hot hereafter for him, hotter even than their own perfervid eloquence. Others were intensely ignorant of the intellectual situation and foolishly scoffed at the "higher critics" and at science generally, stoutly maintaining that evolution was humbug.

There was one little ape-like gentleman, a hairdresser by trade, whose answer to Heathcote always resolved itself into this somewhat unconvincing sentence: "Nothing will persuade me that I have any affinity with a monkey!" It was easy for the Atheist with a comic wink of the eye to persuade the audience in the contrary direction and so score a victory for Darwin. There was one great deficiency which accounted for many of the defeats of Heathcote's adversaries. They were all of them lacking in humour. Sometimes a really learned opponent would be sent by the "Paley League," a society of Christian apologists, to confute him, but he fared as badly as any because he could not take a joke good-humouredly and wild horses could not have drawn him into making one. Heathcote, on the other hand, was a master hand at jokes. The audience loved him for his fun. To listen to him was a

Sunday recreation, and the defeat of a Christian was looked upon more as a triumph of wit which they admired than as a serious blow to a religion which in their inmost hearts the majority of the hearers still believed to be true. In fact, on the rare occasions when Heathcote suffered anything approaching a defeat, the crowd were even more delighted than usual. Secretly they were always glad to find that religion had a good answer to give for itself. But it had to be well given if it was to be reckoned a victory. Some of the old habitués of the Park had been heard to say, "The day will come when a Christian who knows his subject and doesn't mind a joke will meet Heathcote and he'll win."

Had the day arrived? That evening some of them thought it had.

He began his lecture with a definition of terms, always a good thing to do if you want to have a good debate.

#### WHY SOCIALISM MUST BE SECULARIST

"By Socialism I do not mean," he said, "a vague belief in social reform. I mean that revolution in our whole political and economic system which we of the National Secularist Socialist League look forward to, when the instruments of production and distribution will be owned and worked by the whole community for the profit of all and not as now by a few for their own benefit."

After enlarging on this, he defined the word "Secularist" to mean non-religious and even anti-Christian. "I do not only say," he shouted, "that a Socialist need not be a religious man. I say he must not be. As long as we Socialists are wasting our time in worrying our souls (if we've got any, which I doubt!) and the souls of our children about heaven and hell, we shall never get Socialism. Socialism is for this world only. I know nothing and care less for another world. I am here to

make this world a better place to live in. I want to make all men happy and prosperous here and now. Socialism can do this. Christianity not only cannot do it, but by making people think of another world positively prevents them from attempting it."

Remembering what his son had said to him while contemplating the Church parade, Heathcote rubbed it in about the ladies and their Prayer Books.

"Look at those members of the Capitalist classes who gather near here on a Sunday morning. They are the opponents of Socialism, and, mark you, they are Christians too. Here are we meeting in Hyde Park on the side of Socialism and against Christianity. They meet in Hyde Park at what they call the Church parade, on the side of Christianity and against Socialism. I have heard it said that if all were Christians all would be Socialists. If this is so, why is it that Christianity is found supporting the Capitalist class against the Socialists? The more you go to church the less inclined you will be to wish to see Socialism established. Look at the Archbishop of Canterbury, the figure-head of Christianity in this benighted country of snobs and sky pilots. Is he a Socialist with his fifteen thousand quid and his silks and satins and his palace at Lambeth? I only wish I had his job at the price!"

After speaking in this strain for three-quarters of an hour he challenged the audience to answer him.

"Any one may reply, and I will allow him the same time I have had myself. Forty-five minutes, if we can get it over by five o'clock. My son Vincent will take the chair and keep order unless, gentlemen, you have any one else you would prefer to see occupy it. As you know, we Secularists always like to be fair to our opponents, which is more than our friends of the Paley League are inclined to be."

Vincent was popular with the crowd, and his chairmanship was unanimously agreed to.

The monkey from the barber's shop made for the platform, but was greeted with shouts of "We don't want forty-five minutes of him. We can get that at the Zoo any day."

"Not free of charge, gentlemen," said Vincent. "Perhaps Mr. Simian will be content with less than the allotted time."

"Certainly, sir," said the hairdresser. "I only want three minutes just to say this. Mr. Heathcote in the course of his remarks mentioned the word evolution." (Shouts of "Question! Question!") "Now that word immediately suggests to my mind the Darwinian theory." (Shouts of "Now, monkey, where's your stick? Do you want a Hightalian organ-grinder to take you out?")

"Gentlemen," said Vincent, "I must ask you to be fair to Mr. Simian. The lecturer did speak of evolution, and the speaker has a perfect right to comment upon it, though I would remind him that he has only three minutes, and he must look sharp if he is going to deal with the subject, which is, '*Why Socialism must be Secularist.*'"

"I am coming to the subject," said Mr. Simian.

"Monkey!" cried a lean gawky youth in the audience.

"That's just what you are!" said the hairdresser, off his guard.

"Last Sunday you said we couldn't be," said the youth.

Now Heathcote in a similar position would have parried this decided hit with a counter-joke, but the wit of Mr. Simian was not equal to it. Losing his temper, he made a personal remark about the skinniness of the boy's legs, and finding himself quite unable to cope with the crowd, he left the platform muttering something about a cursed lot of infidels.

The next to try his luck was the gentleman known as the "Little Horn."

"In the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel," he began, but the shouts which greeted him were so alarming that, beginning to think he had mistaken his dates and the earthquake had come three months too soon, he jumped down from the platform and made for the Park gates.

"The offer of forty-five minutes," said the chairman, "is still open."

There was a pause, during which it seemed that the fun was over and Heathcote would remain master of the situation. In after years Vincent would tell his friends that at that moment he felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to get up and riddle his own father's arguments. But he was spared the necessity, for there suddenly emerged from the crowd a new opponent who had never been heard in Hyde Park before. He was a clergyman. He was dressed in a plain black cassock, but otherwise had not the appearance of an ascetic or a recluse, such as English people generally associate with that costume, except in the case of the blue-coat boys.

"Petticoats!" cried the lean youth, hoping to make another score.

"Order, order!" said the crowd. "Give him a fair chance."

"Mr. Chairman," said a cadaverous-looking gentleman, "I protest against your allowing that thing dressed in popish garments to address this meeting of British Bible-loving Protestants."

"Surely, sir," said Vincent, "we are not here to discuss a man's clothes. Let us wait and hear what he has to say. That is more important than what he wears."

"By a statute of Queen Elizabeth, sir, he is committing an illegal act by wearing that livery of Rome."

"Shut up, you old statute book," shouted the crowd.

"Let me explain," said the clergyman. "If my friend thinks I am breaking the law let him give me in charge of the police. Here's a shilling for the prosecution."

"You know as well as I do," said the cadaverous preacher, "that the Bishop's veto would stop your prosecution. The bishops are more popish than the Pope."

"Time!" said the gawky youth, and by this salutary interjection quite re-established himself in the good opinion of the crowd.

"The Reverend Mr. Ball will now address you," said Vincent.

"Why it's Farver John," said a drunken-looking docker. "Gawd bless yer, farver, give it 'em hot."

"Father John" was a jolly-looking individual, and seemed to be looking forward to the debate with something like glee. Yet with all his joviality one could see that he was speaking of what to him was a matter of life and death.

He had evidently studied an open-air audience to some purpose. He began by putting himself in their good books by a little good-humoured reference to the cassock incident, remarking that it was not the first time that his petticoats had caused astonishment.

"I am quite used to it," he said. "Why only on my way down here from Limehouse this afternoon somebody informed me that I had got his old wife's nightgown on. To which I replied, 'My dear sir, if your good lady's bed garment is as black as this, pray get her to have it washed.' Some one else cried out after me, 'Charley's Aunt still runnin'.' To this I answered, 'My good friend, there I think you are misinformed. I have seen the play six times, but just at present it's not on the boards, at least at any London play-house.' Another gentleman asked me where my crinoline was, to which I replied, 'You big booby, don't you know they're out of fashion?'"



"He's the right sort for old Heffcut," said the docker.

Then he proceeded to business.

"I will try," he said, "not to occupy three-quarters of an hour, partly because I want some tea, and partly because I would like to hear Mr. Heathcote's reply.

"I will begin by saying that I am here as a very earnest admirer of Mr. Heathcote's work as a Social Reformer. With the exception of the Bible I do not know any book that has inspired me more than his well-known *What might England be*, and I am a weekly reader of *Vox Populi*, which I have no hesitation in calling one of the most righteous newspapers we have. I prefer it infinitely to any of the religious journals it is my fate to have to read. Knowing what Mr. Heathcote believes I am sorry and astonished at the title of his lecture this afternoon. I am sorry because I am absolutely convinced from an extensive experience of English people that they will never accept Socialism if it is put before them as being necessarily Secularist. It is because I am a Socialist in the out-and-out sense of the word as defined by Mr. Heathcote that I foresee with alarm a great reaction of the whole country against our views if it is thought that Socialism implies Secularism. The English are a religious people, and if you want to convert them to Socialism you must not only show them that it is not anti-religious, you must show them that it is a religion itself as well as a political system. Now I will tell you why I am also astonished. Mr. Heathcote's writings, even some of his anti-Christian ones, are intensely spiritual, or at least ethical. He is not a real Secularist, though he thinks he is. He is an Idealist with a great moral ideal which he has set before himself. He wants to see English people living happy, better lives. Now what does he mean by better lives? Surely he does not mean merely well-fed, well-housed lives.

"Now I must protest against his attack on the Church

parade, not because I approve of it, but because he takes it as typical of Christianity. It is exactly the opposite. It is typical of Secularism. It means that many of the Capitalist class think they can worship God and Mammon, the money God and the Christian God at one and the same time. That is exactly what Christ said could never be done. It is because they are Secularists, not because they are Christians, that they behave in the way which I, no less than Mr. Heathcote, condemn. Only here I would add that such secularism is not only to be found at the Church parade. It is everywhere among rich and poor alike. In fact, English society of all classes is not living on Christian principles. And this is exactly why it is so hard to bring about Socialism or anything approaching it in this country. Yet Mr. Heathcote fondly imagines that by making society wholly unchristian, supposing he could do it, which please God he never will, we shall really forward the Socialist movement.

"Once more, let me say that I began life as an Atheist myself. I was more of a Secularist than Mr. Heathcote. I followed Charles Bradlaugh. He made me an individualist like himself, though I was not as sincere and well meaning as he. Then largely through studying the Bible and the Christian religion in order to attack them I became a Socialist. I stand here to-day as one who in becoming a Socialist became at the same time a Christian. My religion teaches me to believe I am the brother of all men: it teaches me my duty to my neighbour: it warns me against covetousness and Mammon worship and selfishness, the very evils which have produced our modern industrial anarchy and moral confusion. Politically, I seem to see the way out of this chaos in Socialism. Morally, I see no way out of it but by Christianity. Christians, my friends, have done many wrong things in history, but always by being untrue to the principles of

their religion. In this they have failed just as all human beings fail. But you won't get things right by giving up the Christian ideal. Mr. Heathcote is wrong in supposing that we Christians are always thinking about the hereafter. Does he really think that the Church paraders whom he takes to be typical Christians are thinking too much of heaven? Why they are thinking too much of earth. They have no ideal. Mr. Heathcote's ideal is a better one than theirs, not because it is Secularist and theirs is Christian, but rather because theirs is too Secularist and his is more Christian."

At this point the chairman intervened with a request from his father that as it was getting late he would like to say a few words in reply. He would allow Mr. Ball to speak again after him if he wished to do so.

Amid loud applause Father John Ball came down from the platform. It was felt that he had made a hit.

"He knows what he's talking about, and no mistake."

"John Baptist didn't half like it."

"That's the kind of parson I like, petticoats or not."

These were some of the remarks which were bandied about in the crowd.

It was five o'clock when Heathcote rose to answer.

"I shall say very few words in reply," he said, "not because Mr. Ball is unanswerable, but because I hope we shall renew this debate at no distant date, and the reverend gentleman wants his tea. I would not deprive him of it for the world. He deserves it, every cup. Two or three things, however, I must remark.

"First, I am glad to hear he reads my books. Perhaps they'll bring him round to us altogether soon. Then I would say that he's what I call a freak parson. He represents nobody but himself. I still maintain that the Capitalist classes represent modern Christianity. They subscribe to churches and build Church schools. They

are the most prominent members of Christian congregations. They are chosen to represent the Church in her councils. They make the bishops, and put the rectors and vicars to the cure of souls, though I am doubtful if they will be likely to give Father John a fat living if he talks to them as he has talked to us to-day. Now, I challenge him to do this. Will he repeat what he has said to-day to the Church paraders themselves next Sunday? Will he stand on a chair and tell them they are not Christians?

"That's one challenge. The next is this. Will he show me a dozen men in high places in the Church who hold the views he does? If Christianity has made him a Socialist, why does it not make the whole bench of bishops into Socialists?"

"I rise to correct Mr. Heathcote, with the chairman's permission," said Ball. "I did not say that Christianity had made me a Socialist. I said that Socialism had made me a Christian. I accept both Mr. Heathcote's challenges. I will give him the names of one hundred clergy who hold much the same views as I do. Will he give me the names of one hundred labour leaders who are Secularists? I don't believe he can. I am personally acquainted with most of them. From what I know of them they would repudiate the title of his lecture. If I do not represent the Church, neither does he represent the bulk of Socialists.

"As for the other challenge, I accept that also. I will speak at the Church parade next Sunday."

"My word, there won't half be a shindy," said the gawky youth.

"I shall be there too to denounce your popery," said the cadaverous one.

"I expect we shall all be there," said both the Heathcotes, as they shook hands with the brave priest.

The meeting broke up into little knots of chattering men. Mr. Simian was the centre of one group, declaiming, as was his wont, against the theory of evolution.

The corpse-like preacher discoursed to another set on the iniquity of burning candles in daylight.

The drunken-looking docker informed an interested circle that Father John Ball was the best parson in London. His description of him sounded like the description of a clergyman who, besides feeding hungry kids, was in the habit of cutting himself while shaving.

And what of Vincent Heathcote? He seemed to have lived a lifetime in that chair that afternoon. What was it which drew him with a mysterious attraction to the speaker, a priest such as he had been taught from babyhood to curse? Was it the cogency of his argument, or was it something more? How curiously like to his own conversation with his father had been the parson's speech. They had been thinking alike, the clergyman and the Secularist lad.

"I must see that man again soon," he thought to himself. "I can't wait till next Sunday."

"Tell me," he said aloud to the drunken docker, "where does this Father John, as you call him, live?"

"Bless yer 'art, don't yer know 'im? Why, he's better known in Limeus than the king hisself. S'Martin's Mishun in Gazey's Rents. That where un 'angs out."

## CHAPTER II

### ST. MARTIN'S MISSION

Soberly now,—who  
Should be a Christian, if not you?—BROWNING

The word he spoke, within my heart  
Stirred life unknown before,  
And cast a spell upon my soul  
To chain it evermore;  
Making the cold dull earth look bright  
And skies flame out in sapphire light.—A. A. PROCTER

JOHN BALL had begun his business life as a solicitor's clerk. Left early an orphan he had been tossed about on the waves of this troublesome world from childhood. A kind parson, who was slaving his life out down in East London as vicar of a parish of 70,000 people in days when Toynbee Hall and Oxford House and Bishops of Stepney were unknown, had found little John in the Whitechapel Road one night and taken him in to supper. He had placed him with the good Doctor Barnardo, who in his turn had tried to ship him off to Canada. But John had managed to give the emigrant party the slip, and had made his way back on foot from Liverpool to London again. There he fell in with some people who kept a coffee-house in Finsbury, and spent their Sunday evenings at the Hall of Science. It was then that his acquaintance with Charles Bradlaugh began, to which he had referred in his Hyde Park speech. Always thoughtful and earnest, he was attracted by the sincerity of the man. His arguments against Christianity seemed to the young clerk

most convincing and unanswerable. The behaviour of many Christians towards him offended against John's idea of justice, and everything that happened in the controversy of the seventies drove him further from the Church and closer to Secularism. Yet he always retained an affection for his early faith, as he had learnt it in the old homes at Stepney.

"I would give anything to believe once more with my whole heart what I believed when I was at Sunday-school," he said one day to a parson who met him coming out of the Hall of Science.

"Perhaps I can help you," said the parson, who turned out to be a well-known Socialist and a prominent defender of Mr. Bradlaugh's civil rights. Through this parson John was first of all converted to Socialism. It was some time, however, before he became a professing Christian again. He thought it out for himself. A materialistic view of life seemed to him utterly incompatible with the ideal of brotherhood and self-sacrifice, which he came more and more to see that Socialism involved.

"I want," he said, "some principle to guide me, so that I can believe in brotherhood, and not only theorise about it. I see that brotherhood can only come about by love and self-sacrifice, not conceived of only as admirable virtues, but believed in as the basis of life itself and corporate action."

"Johnny," said his parson friend, "that's what we Christians have got. We believe in the Fatherhood of God. That is why we are brothers. We believe that Jesus Christ in His life of love and His death of complete self-sacrifice is at one and the same time the manifestation of what God is and what man ought to be. The Church is the great society for carrying out brotherhood in what you call corporate action."

"I'd like to belong to it if I thought it could do that."

"You do belong to it already," said the parson. "When you were baptized at Dr. Barnardo's Home you entered it."

This was the new idea which, entering into the mind of John Ball, brought him back to the old faith. Through the instrumentality of his friend he read for Holy Orders, and in due time became a priest.

St. Martin's Mission, to the care of which he was eventually appointed, was in a slum district in Limehouse. There he worked away quietly, like his Master, "going about doing good," and heard gladly by the common people.

The period of his ministry there was a period of great change, both in Church and State. In politics everything was shifting on to the social plane. Electoral reform had mostly been achieved. The questions then coming up for settlement were questions of social reform, such as municipal government, liberty for trade combination, state interference in factories and workshops, employers' liability, and the rest. The bitter cries of the unskilled labourer, the sweated women-workers, the unemployed, the unemployable and the slum-dwellers were sounding loudly in the ears of philanthropists and statesmen. The clergy in the poor parts of our great cities were discovering that the practical output of the Gospel was being seriously thwarted by the conditions of life and labour under which the masses were struggling.

Everything that young Ball saw and heard and read drove him more and more into Socialism as the ideal of politics and a more practical Christianity as the outcome of doctrine. The cold individualism which he had learnt among the Atheists dropped off him like melting ice. With a thankful heart he perceived that most of the leading Socialists were inclined to look to Christians to help them in furthering their ideals. Labour leaders were welcomed at Church congresses. The Anglican bishops



in conference made pronouncements of a far-reaching character on social problems. Societies were started within ecclesiastical circles for the study of economics. *Vox Populi*, the most successful of "Labour" newspapers, teemed with moral appeals, and week by week raged for justice and righteousness on the earth. John Ball found himself equally acceptable as a speaker at diocesan conferences or Socialists' clubs. The Church and the Socialists seemed to him to be marching arm in arm towards a glorious revival of religion and reform.

So far, so good. But then there came a change. Was it because the Church held back, afraid of going any further with the Socialists? Was it that the Socialists were getting tired of waiting? Was it that the use which the Socialists had made of the clergy to further their views was not because they really saw the connexion of religion and social reform, but only because the clergy were prominent people and therefore useful advocates? Suffice it to say that John Baptist Heathcote and others commenced an attack on Christianity itself, as being responsible for the very evils which Socialism had set itself to combat. This is what had stirred the heart of John Ball, and had made him emerge from his retreat at Limehouse, when he had heard the subject of Heathcote's lecture announced.

It had cost him much to do this. He was happiest among his own people at Limehouse, and did not care to make himself notorious. Nothing but a sense of duty would have made him accept the challenge, which he had done, to attack the Church parade. It was not because he was afraid, but because he felt his own unworthiness.

. . . . .

He was smoking his pipe that Sunday night in the little cottage in Gehazi's Rents. With him were two friends of his, who often visited him in Limehouse. These were

Lord Barton, a rich young man connected with one of the university settlements, and Jack Kesterton, the Liberal-Labour M.P. for an East-End constituency.

"So you're really going to preach to the rich," said Lord Barton. "I'll stand by your side, old chap."

"Well, I thought it wouldn't do to shirk Heathcote's challenge. I don't suppose I shall do much good."

"On the contrary," said Kesterton, "I believe it will do immense good. Believe me, Father John, there are numbers of rich people who only want a lead and they'll come over to us. What we want is a separation between those who care and those who do not. There's a lot of nonsense talked about Little Englanders and Imperialism. The true Little Englander is the man who really does not care for the welfare of the whole English people. He may bluster about the Empire, but if he leaves the masses here at home to wallow in ignorance and perish from injustice, he's a Little Englander himself, for all his talk. Now I believe that if we could once convince the upper classes that the sign of true patriotism is to be eager and earnest about the common welfare of English people, we should find numbers coming over to us, if only for something to do and to think about."

"Yes, Jack, that's true," said Lord Barton, "but it has got to be connected with religion, if it is to last. Ten years ago slumming was the fashion. It has gone out now, like roller skating or cycling in Battersea Park. Slumming was not a religion, it was a fad. Your new patriotism may become the same thing."

"To tell you the truth," chimed in Father John, "I am not sure that much can be done with the upper classes. They are very few in number, and count for less every day in the national life. It is the Church alone that can do it, by which I mean the whole body of the christened members of the Great Society."

"Yes," said Kesterton, "but the upper classes are powerful still. They set the fashion. They are not altogether wrong when they call themselves 'Society.' They represent 'Society' just as the King represents the sovereign power of the State. Moreover, as Heathcote said, they make the bishops and the parish clergy. You cannot get hold of the religious forces of the country until you have secured the officers."

"Yet a mutiny of the rank and file, who insisted on carrying out a campaign against Mammon, might have a great effect," replied Lord Barton.

"That would be all very well," said Kesterton, "if the rank and file really belonged to the Christian army. I know what you are going to say," he went on, seeing that John Ball was about to interrupt him. "You are going to say that they are all in the Christian army by their baptism, but they don't know it. If a soldier took the King's shilling when he was a baby, and grew up without knowing that he had done so, he would not be very effective as one of the army."

"But it's our business to tell him that he is a soldier of Christ," said Ball.

"I still think," went on Kesterton, unconvinced, "that you have got to secure the upper classes, and in them I include the bishops and leading clergy, especially those of the West End of London. The Church parade, which you are about to address, goes to church and then to the Park. You must drive this home. You must ask them why they go to church."

"Look here," said Barton, "it won't do for us to disagree. We all mean the same thing. We see a great revolution coming about in English Society. The question is, What tactics shall the Christian Church pursue under the circumstances?"

"I don't like your word 'tactics,'" said Father John. "I

believe that our business is to preach and practise the Gospel life for the twentieth century, regardless of classes or anything else. If we can unite Christians of all kinds in pursuing a common ideal of love of God and love of man, or if you like to call it worship and brotherhood, we shall be on the right path. The problem is to find the men who will work the Christian revolution. We want an institution within the Church to do for Christianity what the I.L.P. does for Socialism."

"Who said 'tactics'?" laughed Lord Barton.

"It's not tactics. It is the ordinary duty of Christians," said Ball.

"Well, you're the man to do it," said Kesterton. "I'll do my part in Parliament. Barton will do his part in the 'Smart Set.' You will lead the army."

"No, emphatically no. I am a middle-aged parson, fit only to be a parish priest or a bishop."

"My God, if you were a bishop!" said Barton. "Give us another cup of cocoa."

"Is that some one knocking at the door?" asked Kesterton. "I'll be bound it's one of your flock who wants fourpence for a doss."

John Ball went to the door, opened it, and found not a docker, but Vincent Heathcote.

"I am your chairman from Hyde Park," said Vincent. "May I have half an hour's talk with you, if you are not too tired after your day's work?"

"By all means," said Ball. "Come in here. Do not mind these two gentlemen's presence. They are friends of mine."

"Do they hold the same view as you do?" said Vincent, hesitatingly.

"Indeed they do, except when we differ on tactics occasionally. Let me introduce you to Mr. Kesterton, M.P. You know his name. And this is Lord Barton."

"Would you prefer to be alone?" asked Kesterton.

"No, indeed, Mr. Kesterton," replied Vincent. "I expect that what I have to say will interest you as much as Mr.—I mean Father Ball."

"Don't trouble to 'Father' me. I am only nicknamed 'Father' by the dockers down here, and by the Protestant newspapers. The dockers do it because I like it; the Protestants do it because I don't. But first of all, do have some supper. There's a little cold beef left, though not much. Lord Barton has a big appetite, and we had some burglars in as well to-night. You need not be afraid. They have gone. His lordship only takes a little rent and gives it all back again. He is one of those of whom the hymn speaks, the 'thousands meekly stealing.'"

This joke was lost on Vincent, for he had never even heard of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

"Now, Father, don't rot," said Barton. "The matter is much too serious for that, and it's getting late. Sit down here, Mr. Heathcote, and let's hear what you have to say."

Vincent sat down, and in the simplest possible way confessed to his hearers the impression that had been made on him by that afternoon's debate. He told them his life's history, how his father had studied to keep away from him all knowledge of the Christian faith, how, in spite of this, through his study of secular history, he had managed to pick up a good deal, how he admired Francis of Assisi, but thought him a little unpractical, how he delighted in Charles Kingsley's novels, and how dissatisfied he felt with Atheism. "In fact," he said, "I am not really an Atheist, and I do not believe my father is. We are both mad on Socialism. It seems to us the one thing worth living for. If you can show me how Christianity helps one to be a better Socialist, I shall become a Christian."

"Your objection, then, to Christianity is simply that you

do not see the need of it," said Lord Barton. "You think it a luxury, like champagne, which all can do without and most would be better without?"

"Exactly," said Vincent. "If I could do my work better by drinking alcohol, I would drink it, but I find I get on better without it. So with Christianity. Mark you, I don't altogether agree with my father's methods, or with his arguments. He tells me I have no free will. I am perfectly certain I have. He says that we are all victims of our environment and cannot help being good or bad. Here, again, I think he is wrong, though not so very wrong. It struck me this afternoon in listening to Mr. Ball that he had changed his mind very considerably during his life without having changed his environment. Though you were not always rich, were you?"

Father John screamed with laughter. "Why do you think I am rich?"

"I thought all parsons were rich," said Vincent innocently.

"What about your friend, St. Francis?" inquired Kesterton.

"Well, I mean, parsons of the Established Church. I never thought of Francis as a parson at all. Besides, even he had to make himself poor in order to be so."

"My dear Mr. Heathcote, believe me, I was much richer when I was a solicitor's clerk than I have ever been since I became a parson. But that's not the point. We agree with your father about environment, to a certain degree. Rich people are made more selfish by their environment. To be educated at Eton and Christ Church and to live in Park Lane tends to make one selfish. The upper classes are certainly many of them victims of environment. So are the slum dwellers and the people who live in middle class stupidity at Clapham. But we differ from your father when he calls everybody a helpless victim of en-

vironment. We say that people can overcome the influence of environment by the exercise of free will (which, by the way, your father denies that they possess). We think your father's teaching very dangerous and quite inimical to the prospects of Socialism. If the rich, for example, think that Park Lane, champagne and motors of necessity make them selfish, selfish they will remain. If the tenants of Gehazi's Rents think that their environment of necessity makes them drunken and vicious, drunken and vicious they will continue to be. Christianity wants to alter all that. It wants to convince the sweaters that in spite of their environment they need not continue to be selfish and sweat their employés. It wants to convince the dwellers in Limehouse that there is a better life they can lead, in spite of their environment. Let Gehazi who squeezes the rent out of my parishioners become a good Christian, and then, even if he continues to live in the environment of Peckham Rye, he will cease to squeeze his tenants. Let the tenants become good Christians and they will give up getting drunk and join a Trades Union or a Socialist society, and hasten the day when such an environment as their present one shall not exist to 'environ' anybody."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Ball," replied Vincent, "you Christians should work for a better environment for everybody. All your talk about heaven seems so unpractical."

"Say some, not all, of our talk, and we agree with you," said Lord Barton. "No doubt some very unpractical things have been said by Christians, and we don't defend them. But roughly speaking, it is Christianity alone which offers a new environment now and at once for everybody."

"I don't understand," said Vincent. "You must remember all this is quite new to me."

"I mean," replied Lord Barton, "that Christianity is the

offer of a new society to men. We call it the Church. It is a society based on a common acknowledgment of the Fatherhood of God. Men are united in it, not because they are rich or because they are clever, but because they are of one family in their common sonship. Life in this society consists in knowing God, that is, in being good and unselfish and loving. These are the terms on which the family lives. This is the new environment. It is not to begin hereafter, but now. It is what we mean by the Kingdom of God on the earth."

"So far, I understand that your new environment is to begin on earth," said Vincent, who was becoming interested and eager. "Your idea is that the rich and the poor should find a new society in which they will mix with one another here on earth. This new environment you call the Church."

"Exactly so," said Lord Barton.

"But I have two complaints to make," he continued. "In the first place, it's a plan that does not seem in fact to work. You have been making this offer for nineteen hundred years, and behold the result. Christian countries do not show this environment in working order. Slums and villas and palaces, parks and alleys go on side by side, and still form the average environment of the various classes.

"My second complaint is that Socialism has quite another plan, and therefore my father is right when he says we cannot work together."

"Let me try to answer your complaints," said Kesterton.

"You are unfortunately right in saying that our plan has largely failed. But why has it failed? Partly because Christians are human beings, and have shared the faults of other men. In their selfishness they have kept back the Kingdom of God from being realised on earth. The plan is not bad in itself, . It has failed because of the weakness



of those who have tried to carry it out. As Father Ball told us in the Park this afternoon, we are not really a Christian country. There is no Christian country exactly. 'The world' against which Christ warned us is still a great fact which looms large even in a so-called Christian country. But we say that all these social inequalities, all this industrial disorder, is due to the fact that men love 'the world' and reject the offer of the Church. And in spite of our failure, we hold on to the ideal, for we are sure it is right. After all, pagan empires, like that of Rome in old days, or China in modern times, are a proof of a tremendous improvement that has been wrought, where only an attempt has been made to carry out the principles of Christ. I doubt if you and your father would have ever thought of Socialism as a possibility if you had not been in an atmosphere where, in spite of the world, Christian ideas largely prevail."

"And now for my second complaint," said Vincent, smiling at the earnestness with which these three men reasoned with him. "If I don't answer you, you must not think I am convinced. Three to one is a bit thick, you know."

"I'll try number two," said Father John, mixing his third cup of cocoa. "Your second complaint is that Socialism is a plan which proposes to work on other lines to Christianity, and therefore cannot be combined with it. By this, I gather, you mean that Socialism is a political and economic plan, whereas Christianity is moral and spiritual. You are quite right and quite wrong at the same time. If Christianity was a political plan, it certainly could not quite fit in with Socialism, though as a matter of fact it would work in better with Socialism than it does with our modern, political, and industrial system. But it is not directly political. It has tried to be in times past, and has failed. We do not propose to invoke the aid of the State

to force people to go to church and Holy Communion, or to carry out the Sermon on the Mount. We leave it to Socialism to get State aid to carry out its projects. We hope it will succeed, because we believe that the principles of Christ will have a better chance of being realised when the present competitive system is done away. But this does not mean that the Christian offer of a new moral environment cannot be made concurrently with Socialism. On the contrary, we believe and are sure that it is by drawing men into the Kingdom of God on earth, that they will be made most ready to welcome Socialism and to live in it, when it comes. Have you ever thought, for example, what an enormous change of ideas must come about in human society before Socialism can be accepted as the new system under which we are to live? We have got to change our whole idea of property, our whole idea of trade. We have got to raise men's ideas of the worth of every individual: we have got to inoculate men with a passion for unselfishness: we have got to familiarise them with the thought of fraternity. You can see the change going on now, but its progress is very slow. Municipalisation is a step towards Socialism. Is it popular? Is it easy to persuade men that it is good? Not at all. Men have got to wish to be brothers, to be willing to be unselfish and self-sacrificing before Socialism can wholly succeed. This is just where Christianity must come in. Christians are to gather men into the Kingdom of God, and there by persuasion and (as we believe) by the grace or help of God they will become unselfish brothers. With a sufficient number of unselfish brothers about among the rich and poor, Socialism will have a chance. Without them it will fail."

"In fact," said Vincent, "you look upon the Church as a great agency for turning out the sort of men who will bring about and maintain a Socialist state of society."

"Exactly so. You could not have put it better," said Kesterton.

"One word more. You have shown me that Socialists have a gigantic task before them. But Christians have undertaken something even bigger still. Do you really think that the Anglican Church is at all prepared to accomplish it?"

Father John paused before he replied to this. At last he spoke—

"Frankly, Mr. Heathcote, I believe we can do it better than any one else, especially if such as you will help us. Come and join us in compelling the Church to carry out her programme."

"I'll give you an answer after next Sunday," said Vincent. "We will meet at the Church parade."

## CHAPTER III

### ON PARADE

Marvel ye not if in announcing new things we meet with so many contradictions.

The cause of Christ is bound to have victory.—SAVONAROLA

The world is one thing and worldliness another. The latter is an enemy of the interests of Christianity; but it is also an enemy of the interests of the world.—FATHER GEORGE TYRRELL

THE Dean of Doncaster was preaching at St. Silas', Dukery Square. The offertory was to be for the East London Church Fund. This accounted for the crowd of fashionable people who filled all the available pews on the next Sunday morning after Heathcote's lecture. The service was full choral Matins and Litany, sung by a choir which it cost £1500 a year to maintain, accompanied by an organ which had cost £4000. The united salaries of the assistant clergy amounted to £900. There were six of them. The united incomes of the smart set who nestled in the cushioned pews would probably have totalled at least five millions sterling. These arithmetical details may help us to understand the situation. At least, they helped John Ball, as he stood in one of the free seats behind the Duchess of Derwentwater, as she warbled in a deep contralto voice, while she felt for a threepenny-bit—

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small.”

It is only fair to the Duchess to remark in passing that she paid £2 a year for a seat, which she seldom occupied,

being more frequently engaged on Sundays at her villa at Datchet, where she rested after her week's exertions. She had stayed in town to-day to hear the Dean, who was distantly related to her and who was coming to lunch to meet the Bishop of London. Moreover, she had secretly vowed to send next Sunday's winnings at bridge (if there were any) to her nephew at the Oxford House for his boy's club.

The Dean was a fine-looking old gentleman of aristocratic bearing. His Church views were of the order known as "safe." He had signed a petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury against vestments, and he carefully disobeyed the law by not wearing a cope in his cathedral. He was much alarmed at the reported doings of the Labour Party, and thought it his duty to warn the congregation at St. Silas' against Socialism. He took for his text the words, "Be content with your wages," but he did not apply this so much to the choir or to the curates as to certain persons whom he called "the masses," but whom he apparently had never met. These men were offered, he said, a fair wage for a fair day's work, which they were very often too drunk to perform. He did not mention the women whose wages averaged three halfpence an hour. Nor did he say what the fair wage was which was offered to the tippling men, nor of how many hours the fair day's work consisted.

"Now," said the Dean, "there are two possible sets of leaders for these masses, for they must be led, being too childish to go by themselves. There are the Socialists, Trades Unionists, Anarchists, and such-like, and there are the clergy. It is only too plain whither the former are leading them. Recent strikes, attempts at assassination of crowned heads, suggestions of secular education" (he lumped them all together), "these are the paths of Socialism. The clergy, on the other hand, will lead them

right. They will teach them the Catechism ; they will give them soup and blankets ; they will inculcate the principles of law and order, and show them how entirely subversive of all that is moral a revolution such as the Socialists propose would be.

"I am no politician, and I do not like the clergy to mix up with such things, but I must say that if ever there was a time when we ought to bestir ourselves, it is now. This East London Church Fund is, of course, non-political, but I tell you, my brethren, you could not do anything better to stave off a revolution than subscribe to it.

"'Be content with your wages.' Yes, tell them that. How wonderfully the Holy Scripture speaks to us just what we want to learn ! Could there be a better text at such a crisis in our history, when discontent is being preached on all sides ?

"I am not one of those who would flatter you, but I must say that in my opinion the aristocracy, the old landed gentry of England, the finest people in the world, aye, and even some of those, perhaps all of those, who, though not beginning life in the highest circles, are now by their wealth, gained, I trust, in no selfish way, admitted into the same ranks—I say that they show an admirable example of contentment to the lower orders and their less fortunate brethren, which they would do well to copy.

"My friends, I commend to you the" (he was just going to say "toast") "the needs of the East London Church Fund."

The congregation then sang, "Then gladly will we give to Thee," and filed out of church leaving £42 5s. 7½d. in the plate, an average of less than sevenpence a head.

"If I were a layman I expect I should swear," said John Ball, as he walked out. "I hope Vincent Heathcote was not there. If he was, it is all up."

"What a dear old man the Dean is!" said the Duchess of Derwentwater to her daughter, Lady Mary. "Oh, there's Lady Spicebox. I must ask her to lunch. She's a horrid Socialist, and we shall have some fun with her and the Dean. Just go to the vestry, Polly, and bring the old man on to the Park. Now, Lady Spy, do come to lunch after the Park. I want you to meet the preacher."

"If I do, you'll have ructions, Duchess. I never heard such rubbish in my life. Oh, I am so sorry. I forgot he's your cousin."

"Only very distant, through the Ormsby Vavasours," said the Duchess. "Between ourselves I did not think much of it. Though of course, as you know, I don't like this absurd Socialism at all, which I am sorry to hear you are taking up with. Now, how would you like everybody to be equal, and to have to dine with your lodge-keeper or your stay-maker?"

"Oh, I think it would be frightfully original and all that, you know," said Lady Spy. "I should enjoy it immensely."

"For once, I dare say, it might be a relief after the tedium of Mayfair dinners, which are truly terrible, especially when the Duke will ask those political friends of his and their dowdy wives; but I couldn't stand it more than once, nor could you, Lady Spy."

"I don't think you understand what Socialism is. It's most interesting and all that, you know. I wish you'd let me introduce you to Bill Bunks, the Labour M.P. I can assure you he's most delightful, and quite a gentleman in his way, and all that, you know."

"Well, are you coming to lunch after the Park?"

"Delighted to come, if you will let me bring Reggie Barton. I must have him by my side to help to give the Dean cold thrills. He knows all about Socialism and all that even better than I do."

"By all means bring him; but mind, I won't have Stunks, or whatever his vulgar name is. Oh, here's the dear Dean. My dear Algy, what a gorgeous sermon yours was. I do hope that ugly Baroness Schloss shelled out. She was just in front of me. Of course, I put in my little mite. Let me introduce you to Lady Spicebox. She's coming on to lunch, and she's going to bring Lord Barton. What a gruesome gown Mrs. Harry Cooper's wearing this morning. Of course, her husband's not with her. Who's that vulgar man talking to her? Is that Bunks?"

"No, mother, that's Lord Haypence, the millionaire," said Mary.

"Dear me! Is it really? How extremely interesting. Let's see, what was he? A sort of newsboy wasn't he, or a printer, or something?"

"He was an editor, I believe. Oh, look, mummy, there's the meat man!"

"The meat man, my dear! Who do you mean? I don't even know the name of our butcher. Pressensé manages all that. Oh, I see, it's that American who has just come over who makes sausages. Yes, he's rather handsome. Of course Mrs. Market Hatcham is after him for those passably pretty girls of hers. How improper! She's almost kissing him. Poor fellow, the paint will come off on his moustache if he doesn't take care. Here, hold my Prayer Book, Polly, and take care the emerald cross doesn't drop out; it's rather loose. Good morning, Lady Loafer: were you at St. Silas'? Such an interesting sermon from the Dean of Doncaster; my cousin, you know. Let me introduce you!"

"I am so sorry I couldn't come to hear you, Mr. Dean, but I had to go to St. Clara's to-day."

"What! do you mean to say you've been to that Popish place?" said the Dean. "I thought better of you, Lady Loafer."



"Well, you see, I have to go to these places sometimes. I am writing an article for the *Fortnightly* on the 'Mass Vestments and the Sensuous Worship of the Day.'"

"I must congratulate you, Lady Loafer," said the Duchess, "on the decorations at your daughter's wedding. I never saw anything so lovely in my life. Those orchids on the table must have cost a fortune; and how did you manage to get Cattiva to sing that scrumptuous 'Ave Maria'? She won't come to me under a hundred guineas, and I know her rather well, you know."

"Oh, I am afraid she will want two hundred for her solo, but Sir Martyn doesn't mind paying that. We were determined to have it well done. Did you like the pages' dresses and their silver wands? That was my idea."

"Lovely, I thought," said the Duchess. "But tell us what you saw at St. Clara's."

"It was too shockin' for words," replied Lady Loafer. "There were clergymen dressed in white brocade robes, and conceited little boys running about in red and white pinafores, and a sickenin' smell of incense. Sir Martyn Loafer was so horrified that he went out after the sermon."

"What was the sermon about?"

"Oh, about Hail Mary, or some such rubbish. It is disgraceful that our churches should be used for such mummerly and outward show. But what's that clergyman doin' there on a chair? Good heavens! Are we going to have Ritualism in the Park too? Life won't be worth livin' in London. Let's come and hear what he's talkin' about."

Father John was by this time at it hammer and tongs. He had begun by tearing the Dean's sermon to tatters, much to the delight of Lady Spicebox, who declared in a loud voice that it was better than a glass of champagne to

hear him. Then he preached his own sermon on the same text: "Be content with your wages."

"Yes," he said, "ladies and gentlemen, I tell you that text is meant for you. The soldiers, to whom St. John the Baptist was preaching when he said those words, were in the habit of looting other people's property to get more than they had a right to. That is what many of you are doing.

"What are your wages? 'A rich man's wages are paid in advance,' said a good man once. If God has given you money, it is that you may do good with it. You are not exempt from work. You must learn and labour truly to get your own living quite as much as those whom you call the lower orders, to whom you wish to have the Catechism taught at the expense of the rate-payers.

"But you are not content even with £10,000 a year! You are looting your neighbours. You are taking from them their life-blood, which is worse than any Roman soldiers did. You are sweating the poor girls who make your dresses. You are driving men and women to drink in your blazing public-houses. You are forcing them to live in slums, where you would not put your pet dogs or horses. You are making your ten and your twenty per cent by murdering others with adulterated food. And all that you may have more and more money with which to buy your motor-cars or to gamble at bridge.

"And you think you can make it all right with your offended God by insulting Him with a paltry hour's so-called worship? Did you say your prayers at St. Silas' this morning? Many of you did not. You were worshipping Mammon. You were hoping to stave off a revolution by giving a miserable sixpence to the East London Church Fund, that you may go on living in luxury and idleness. Since church, what have you been talking about? Scandal?

Divorce cases? Smart dresses, which have been made perhaps at the cost of a dressmaker's life, and which you haven't paid for?

"Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, the freedom of my ministry. I am here in answer to a challenge. An atheist dared me to say this to you! But why is he an atheist? Simply because he takes you for specimens of Christianity as you sit there with your bejewelled Prayer Books."

"Polly, put my book in your pocket," whispered the Duchess.

"I haven't got one, mummy," said Lady Mary, almost crying.

"Don't think I'm angry," said John Ball. "I am excited. I may have been unkind to some. But I am sure my words are true of many. Jesus told me to say them. Jesus, who died for you on the cross. Jesus, who lives for you. He's my Master and yours. I am jealous for my Master's honour. Why do we cause the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme? Why do we force men to say that Christianity is played out? It is a lie. There's time yet for the old standard of Christ to be raised again in London. It rests with you whether or not the coming Revolution shall be for God or against Him. Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

He burst into tears, and, leaning on Kesterton's arm, stepped down from the chair.

"What a disgustin' exhibition!" said Lady Loafer. "Worse than the popery at St. Clara's."

"A horrid fellow, my dear," said the Duchess of Derwentwater. "Come back to lunch at once. It's nearly half-past two, and the Dean must be famished. Why do they ordain these men of the lower orders? It's an insult to religion."

"Are the clergy often taken like this in London?" said the meat man.

"Oh no, Mr. Vandertrust," said Mrs. Market Hatcham, blushing through the paint. "He's a lunatic, a sort of Dissenter, I expect."

"He's good copy, though," said Lord Haypence. "I must find out his name."

"Father, isn't he grand?" said Vincent. "I feel inclined to kneel down and say the Lord's Prayer for the first time in my life."

"Humph!" was John Baptist's reply.

## CHAPTER IV

### GOOD COPY

Can you expect the thinking men outside to come in when they see the Christian message so distorted that it reads, Love as brothers and agree like dogs?—W. CROOKS, M.P.

A FEW extracts from the newspapers of the week following John Ball's visit to the Church parade may serve to show how his behaviour struck various classes of persons.

First there was the interviewer or newsgay gatherer from the *Daily Postbox*. He turned up at St. Martin's Mission that Sunday evening to cull some copy, and this is how he put it in the next day's issue:—

“SCATHING DENUNCIATION  
OF THE  
SMART SET.  
ANGLICAN PARSON DECLARES  
FOR  
SOCIALISM.  
WILL THE BISHOP INTERFERE?

“The Church paraders had an unusual experience yesterday morning. They were suddenly confronted by a clergyman dressed in a cassock, who, mounting a chair, proceeded to denounce the upper classes for their peccadilloes. In very questionable taste he severely criticised the sermon which many of his audience had just heard from the Dean of Doncaster at St. Silas', Dukery Square.

"WHO IS THE PARSON?"

"Our representative called last night at St. Martin's Mission, Gehazi's Rents, Limehouse, where he found the reverend gentleman, who had just had his supper, and was

"SMOKING A PIPE.

"He appeared unwilling to make any comment upon the Hyde Park episode, but our representative, from inquiries made in the district, is able to inform our readers that Rev. John Ball is well known in Limehouse and goes by the sobriquet of

"FATHER JOHN.

"It seems that he coquettes with the extreme party among the Socialists, and has appeared on their platforms denouncing the present order of things. He is, of course, a Ritualist and a member of the usual secret societies who appear to be trying to curry favour with the advanced section of the Labour Party. His parishioners are a drunken lot, and he does not seem to have done much to make them amend their ways. He is probably too much occupied in

"MEDDLING WITH THE ARISTOCRACY.

"Another of our representatives called at Fulham Palace regarding the event. The Bishop's Chaplain said that no information had been officially received by the Bishop. It is probable that the affair will blow over."

So much for the *Daily Postbox*. And now for "Corrie" in *Chit-Chat*.

"Corrie" is a female philosopher who records the doings of the Smart Set and comments upon them for the edification of the middle classes. It is she who informs the Summerbothams of Herne Hill that "Mrs. Freddy Fitzroy has gone back to the Grange"; that "it is not true that

the young Princes have begun to knit muffetees"; that "the pearls worn by Lady Macpherson at the Court once belonged to Madame de Maintenon"; and that "there is a talk of bringing in ping-pong again next year, but that the Duchess of Mecklenburg Holstein is trying to persuade the Queen to prevent it."

Of course "Corrie" was in Hyde Park that Sunday, and of course she "noticed" Mrs. Market Hatcham conversing prettily with Mr. Vandertrust, and hoped that the celebrated American millionaire admired the peach-like softness and durability of our English complexions.

Of course she was glad to see Sir Arthur Pumper back again after his serious operation for appendicitis, and his stay at Brighton in the villa so kindly lent him during his convalescence by the Levi Millions.

Of course she welcomed the reappearance of the Stoney Brockhams after their distressing experiences in the Bankruptcy Court, and congratulated them on the contents of their Aunt Lady Betterluck's will. "Corrie" is always glad to see her friends. We hope they are equally glad to see her, and that they ask her back to lunch after her hard work; though rumour has it that she is content with a penny sandwich and a glass of zoedone at Victoria Station on her way home to Penge.

Well, this is what "Corrie" said about John Ball:—

"While we were rapidly losing ourselves in admiration of the fairy-like features of the youngest daughter of Lady Dick Mytton, who will certainly be *première débutante* the season after next, and who has already made a good impression at Ascot in company with her elder sisters, one of whom made such a splendid match last year with the handsome Count Felix Thun, who we are sorry to hear has injured his wrist at polo when playing with the Grand Duke Novoroff at Cannes, we suddenly heard a voice like the voice of some Israelitish prophet sounding in our ears.

We turned round, and there upon a green chair stood a clergyman, who I afterwards learnt was the Reverend John Ball from the East End somewhere. Some call him 'Father John,' though I confess to a dislike of such titles, except, of course, when applied to the genuine article, a Catholic priest. He undoubtedly 'caught on.' Some of the best people took the front seats nearest the chair and remained to the end. Among them I noticed the Duchess of Derwentwater in heliotrope, and her daughter Lady Mary Grassmere in a bewitching arrangement of *mousseline de soie* over Liberty salmon. Lady Spicebox was chatting merrily in a rainbow-coloured toque to Lord Barton, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy what was being said by the new prophet.

"Altogether it was a brilliant scene, the effect being distinctly heightened by the sombre gown of the preacher towering above the parasols and hats of his audience. I noticed M. de Costa, the artist whose sketches are now on view at the Schocher Gallery in Bond Street, and we all hope he will give us his impression of the *tout ensemble* some day.

"It was difficult to get near enough to hear the sermon, but I gathered that it consisted of the usual attack on the vices of society. The novelty consisted in the time and place of its delivery. There is a talk of the Bishop having to interfere, but I do not think this is likely.

"Mr. Ball seemed to be on terms of intimacy with Lord Barton, but this popular peer's interest in social reform schemes is well known, which accounts for it. The Barton family are of course connected by marriage with the Duke of Sheffield, whose daughter, Lady Violet Gander, whistled so divinely at the Botanical Gardens last season. By the way, I should have mentioned that the death of the Dowager Duchess of Monkswearmouth accounted for the absence of many of the habitués of



the Park. Of course her sudden decease plunges the whole of the Vansittarts into mourning, besides several collateral branches such as the Gigbies and the Moriarty Drakes. I should think, as the old lady was past ninety, they will be out again in time for Goodwood."

Let us now turn from "Corrie" to the religious newspapers.

We give first an extract from the *Protestant Hue and Cry*. We believe it was written by Lady Loafer. It was headed:—

"A SUNDAY IN LONDON

"It is a great trial to a good Protestant to have to attend any place of worship other than those where the principles of the Reformation are adhered to, but I feel it my duty from time to time to visit other churches in order to expose what is going on. If we Protestants are not on the alert, we shall find the Establishment slipping from our grasp, and ourselves overwhelmed in a maelstrom of Popery from which we shall barely escape by the skin of our teeth.

"Last Sunday I visited the notorious church of St. Clara. St. Clara indeed! What does the Protestant Church know of that misguided woman who in the Dark Ages was beguiled by that monkish fanatic Francis of Assisi into adopting the life of a nun with all its atrocious and infamous accompaniments? Why do not the bishops of the Establishment, when called upon to dedicate a church, insist on naming it after John Calvin or Thomas Cranmer or even Hannah More? Why should we be compelled to defile our Protestant lips with the names of Papist women, who were little better than heathens?

"However, when I got inside I understood why the church is called by a Catholic name. The service was

Catholic from beginning to end. The so-called 'priests' were dressed up in white silk gowns, and made me positively giddy with their antics at the table. Round about them there were dancing and dodging a number of silly-looking boys and beardless youths dressed like school girls in red and white. I believe the service was taken from the Prayer Book, but I could not find my place. Needless to say that the beautiful service of Morning Prayer provided for Sunday, and which has made the English people what they are, a Sabbath-loving nation, was not said at all.

"A so-called sermon was preached, in which, so far as I could gather, the clergyman told us we ought to admire the Virgin Mary. This seemed to me wholly out of keeping in a Protestant place of worship. As a Catholic friend of mine said to me the other day, 'Your churches are getting quite Catholic in outward appearance, and your clergymen talk as if they were Catholic priests.'

"Sick at heart at what I had witnessed, I went from St. Clara's Church to Hyde Park. It was a blessed sight to see so many people there who had evidently been to church on the Sabbath Day. But even there I found that I had not done with ritualism.

"A man who calls himself 'Father' John was standing on a chair, dressed in a cassock, just like the ones you see on the Continent worn by Catholics. He was speaking loud and fast. I must do him the justice to say that he did not talk about candles and incense. But there wasn't a word of Gospel such as we Protestants love from beginning to end. He had nothing to say about salvation or heaven or hell. This is not surprising, for he was evidently an unconverted man. He talked about worldly matters, such as the adulteration of food, the housing of the poor, motor-cars, and things like that. Can we be surprised when such rubbish is dealt out by a minister of the Gospel

that the masses of the people are going down to hell unsaved?

"If he had talked about salvation to some of the poor people who were standing round he might have done some good. Instead of this, he kept on addressing the ladies and gentlemen. No doubt they have their faults, but it is most improper and out of place to talk to them in this way in the presence of their inferiors.

"This new style of sermon (if sermon it can be called) is, I am told, becoming only too common among the ritualists. Not knowing their Bibles, which they never read or allow other people to read, they have to go to Socialists and such-like to get something to say. Some of them are making themselves popular with the lower orders in this way; but what is the use of being popular with the poor if you have got no Gospel to give them? Depend upon it, this new move of the ritualists is even more dangerous than the wearing of vestments and the burning of candles. The poor were not much influenced by that, but they may be attracted by this Socialism into the net of the priest.

"We know what that means. It means saying good-bye to all decency and family affection. It means the ruin of our dear Protestant country. It means the return of England to the filthy confessional and all its abandoned wickedness. It means the Disestablishment of the Church. It means the ruin of our commercial supremacy, which is of course the direct result of the blessed Reformation. God help us. Couldn't the King interfere before it is too late?"

This effusion caused great amusement at St. Martin's Mission and in Church circles generally. Whether or not it reached the royal palace we cannot say, but His Majesty did nothing.

The High Church journals for the most part com-

mented favourably upon the event, though all agreed that Father John was too personal in his remarks about the Dean of Doncaster.

This is from the *Ecclesiastical Times* :—

“Father Ball whose devoted work in Limehouse has entitled him to be listened to with respect, even if we do not altogether agree with him, delivered himself of an oration in Hyde Park last Sunday, which seems to have stirred up the feelings of the aristocracy.

“We own that in our opinion neither the Church parade nor listening to sermons of this description in the open air are ideal ways of keeping Sunday. Let people go to their Mass and then spend their time in innocent recreation. Late Matins with no Mass followed by a noisy reception in the Park, even if interspersed with a sermon or two by Father Ball, and ending up with a champagne luncheon which too often prevents the attendance of the servants at Mass, does not seem to us nearly as good a way of observing the precepts of the Catholic Church as is to be found on the Continent.

“We think, too, that Father Ball forgot himself when he criticised the sermon of a brother priest, the Dean of Doncaster, which had just been preached in St. Silas' Church, and though we are largely in sympathy with the views of the Father on social problems, we consider that a definite throwing in of our lot with the Socialists, such as he appears to advocate, would be detrimental to the best interests of the Church.”

When Kesterton read this it made him rather cross. He was a High Churchman of liberal opinions, and it was one of the objects of his life to draw the main body of the High Church party into a more frank approval of Socialism. The *Ecclesiastical Times* was read by thousands of churchmen, and had occasionally accepted an article from him on the social problem which had gone almost to the

edge of definite Socialism. The various "Christian Social" societies in the Church seemed to Kesterton to hold back at a certain point for fear of committing themselves, and they would be encouraged in their sluggishness by this damping account of Father Ball's prophetic utterance.

"We have got a long job before us," he said to himself. "Vincent Heathcote is right. It's a race between the Secularists and the Christians as to which is to guide the coming revolution. Father John says he is too old and too busy to lead us. What if this Vincent is called by God to do it?"

"What's that you are saying about Vincent?" said Lord Barton, coming into the room in the midst of Kesterton's cogitations.

"I was saying to myself: 'What if Vincent Heathcote is called by God to lead a great Christian Socialist revolution in Church and State?'"

"Aren't you a little too previous, old boy?" said Barton. "He's not a Christian yet."

"He's already more Christian than the Duchess of Derwentwater," replied Kesterton.

"Steady there," said Barton, "he hasn't been baptized."

"No; but like those people in the Bible he may be receiving an outpouring of the Spirit before his christening," said Kesterton.

"Look here," said Barton, "I'd like to help that chap to get Holy Orders, that is, if you and the Father think he ought to be ordained."

"Who's getting 'previous' now?" laughed Kesterton.

"Well, it's quite clear to me that you fellows mean to make him a Christian. Now, when he is one, shall we get him into the priesthood or shall we leave him to do his work as a layman?"

"It's quite certain that if he becomes a Christian he will exercise an enormous influence among the Socialists,"

said Kesterton. "His father practically leads them now by his speeches and his articles in *Vox Populi*. But Vincent is the better Heathcote of the two. He is far more of a student than his father, and it is learning which pays in the long run. He is a prominent member of all their clubs and societies. Barton, if we catch him we shall collar the lot."

"Yes, but you haven't answered my question yet. Shall he be ordained?"

"Well, we will ask Father John. I am on the whole inclined to say yes. You see, Vincent is essentially religious. His Socialism is at present his religion. Directly he understands the Catholic faith he will become a Christian Socialist of the true kind. He will be frightfully in earnest. He will not talk platitudes about the 'Relationship of Christianity to Socialism' or 'What Ought to be the Attitude of Churchmen towards the Social Problem.' To him Christianity and Socialism will be one great thing, the greatest thing in the world. He will sing with my quasi-namesake, Gilbert Chesterton:—

"Tie in a living fetter  
The prince and priest and thrall,  
Bind all our lives together,  
Smite us and save us all;  
In ire and exultation  
Aflame with faith, and free,  
Lift up a living nation,  
A SINGLE SWORD to thee."

"Then which is he to be?" said Barton, "the prince, the priest, or the thrall?"

"The priest," replied Kesterton, "and you the prince?"

"And you the thrall?"

"Yes, I the thrall."

"And where does dear old Father Ball come in?"

"Oh, he's all three in one," said Kesterton.

## CHAPTER V

### VOX DEI

Much may remain dark to us; but the purposes of life receive a clear and powerful direction the moment we believe that the one supreme way of life is that JESUS CHRIST, God's Son, our Lord, who has been made known to us from the first in the Creed. No other single way, capable of uniting the whole nature and life of man, has yet been discovered which does not tend to draw us down rather than lift us up.—DR. HORT

THE Heathcotes lived in Walthamstow. Of all dull places this is the dullest, yet it is near some of the prettiest parts of greater London. A bicycle will take you in five minutes away from wearying Walthamstow. Fleet Street, where the father did his work, was noisier, but much more interesting. But after all it is the people, not the place, that make one's home dull or not dull, and "Yeast Lodge" (for that was the name which Vincent with his love of Kingsley had insisted on calling it) was frequently full of people by no means dull. Almost every evening when there happened to be no lecturing to be done, and, especially, when the *Vox* had gone to press for the week and there was time to pause, Heathcote's friends would call and have a talk. Men with keen intellects and others with warmer hearts, women all on fire for social reform, would meet and talk things over. Week by week the whole staff of the *Vox* dined together at 2 p.m. and discussed the "make-up" for the next number.

What an eye-opener a few days' visit to Yeast Lodge would have been to the Dean of Doncaster!

Instead of a secret manufactory of bombs he would have found a neat little drawing-room, kept beautifully tidy by Kitty Barnes, the widow of Osmund Barnes the Chartist, who had been housekeeper to Heathcote since he lost his wife. How she loved her two boys, as she called the father and the son! If the Dean had been present at a meeting of the staff or a committee of some Socialist Society, instead of hearing wild talk about breaking windows in Pall Mall he would have heard men and women discussing deep problems of economics and showing a mastery of the subject by the side of which his own knowledge would have dwindled into nothingness. If he had inspected the library he would have been surprised to see what books Vincent read. He might perhaps have been shocked at the elder Heathcote's note-books which he used in Hyde Park. He would have thought them irreverent if he had read some of the scribblings in his interleaved New Testament.

"But why, Mr. Dean?" one might have asked him, "is this man occupying himself in trying to upset your religion? Is it not because such as you have not been sympathetic with him in his doubts? Is it not because your religion has not been explained to him or practised in his sight in such a way as to lead him to suppose he needs it?"

"What a pity, Mr. Dean, you did not spend a week here before you preached that sermon at St. Silas'!"

"The back numbers of *Vox Populi* would have primed you up with a new set of statistics which would have had the advantage over your own by being true ones. You might have learnt something about the earnings of the poor which you could have compared with the amount spent annually in luxury by the class who formed your congregation. You might have come across Professor Marshall's alarming estimate that the six million rich waste



no less than four hundred millions in luxuries, or nearly as much as the twenty-five million working folk spend on necessaries. Oh, Mr. Dean, why did not you think before you spoke?"

"Or you, Mr. Vicar of the parish where Yeast Lodge stands, why did you send your district visitor with a tract about 'Everlasting Fire' to Mrs. Barnes and ask her to give it to Mr. Heathcote? Why did not you go yourself and ask if he would like to see you and talk over the Christian religion in a Christian way? Why are you always jumbling up Socialists and Secularists and shaking your fist at Yeast Lodge from the pulpit, when you know just as much about Mr. Heathcote as your churchwardens do about St. Athanasius—which is nothing?"

These are conundrums which might have been asked at the Diocesan Conference of St. Albans Diocese. They might have been more useful than the debates which took place on "Tithe Rent Charge," and "The limits of Ritual allowed in the Church of England."

Perhaps if they had been asked and answered the old vicar would have been removed to a seaside resort, or better still a canon's stall, and his place given to Father Ball. This, however, would have been difficult to do, for the living is in the hands of a Protestant Society which shows its contempt for outward forms, by insisting that all its nominees shall stand at a certain corner of the Holy Table when administering the Lord's Supper. Father Ball would probably have refused, not because he is a Ritualist, but because he is an Englishman who won't be bullied into anything.

But are we not exaggerating the importance of having a good vicar for the sake of one house, Yeast Lodge? Can the great Church of England worry itself about such a detail? Why not? If in that one house is being discussed night after night by men and women in deadly

earnest the future course of England's trade and politics. If in that one house there dwells a man who is swaying the minds of one hundred thousand readers every week, telling them that their safety lies in rejecting the Christian Gospel.

Would not the Church authorities trouble themselves if they were appointing an incumbent to a parish where there was one big house occupied by a rich lord? Might they not ask, "Is our candidate the kind of man who will get on well with my lord, the squire? Will the squire be able to ask him to dinner? Is his wife presentable? Will he preach sermons the squire will like? Can he play croquet with the squire's daughters? Will he let the mission-room to the Primrose League?" Yet what is the real social and national importance of such a house as my lord's compared with that of Yeast Lodge?

Well, at any rate we think Yeast Lodge sufficiently important to give it a whole chapter to itself.

Vincent was sitting at his writing-table doing a German exercise.

"When's father coming in to-night?" he said.

"He'll be in directly, Vinney," said Mrs. Barnes. "He's got a special meeting of the staff to-night and we are going to have ducks and green peas for tea. How partial my old man was to ducks, especially if they were stuffed. I remember his tucking into the ducks one evening after the riots. My word!"

"You must have had a lark as well as a duck in those days, Aunt Kittens. Do you think we shall have riots in England again soon?"

"Well, my dear, things are different now. I sometimes wonder what your father would have said and written if he'd lived in my youth. Why, we had black bread to eat! I had no schooling except half an hour at the factory when I was all over grease and black. We were slaves in those

days, and now your father thinks them are slaves as works more than eight hours a day. Why, I worked fourteen hours a day afore I was ten year old."

"Look here, Aunt Kittens, did the Christians do anything for you then? By the by, are you a Christian? I never thought of asking you that before."

"Vinney, you know your father won't have any religion talked in this house, but since you ask me I'll tell you. If a Christian means one who never did harm to no one in his life and wouldn't hurt a fly, then I am one of them. If a Christian means one as goes to church or chapel on Sunday and spits and snarls at his neighbour all the week, then I am not one and I don't want to be, neither."

"That's good philosophy, auntie; but has it never struck you that a person might go to church and learn there how not to want to spit at his neighbour all the week?"

"Bless me, Vinney, you talk like a parson. Hadn't you better get on with your German? Mr. Sloser'll be here in the morning and you won't have much time to-night after the staff comes."

"But you haven't answered my other question, Aunt Kittens. Did you come across any Christians in the Chartist days? Did you ever see Charles Kingsley, for instance?"

"Of course I did. He hasn't been dead long. Why my old man knew him and Mr. Maurice and Lord Shaftesbury and Richard Oastler and lots of 'em. But they weren't regular Christians."

"It's precious difficult to find what a Christian is," thought Vincent to himself. "I shall have to go down to Limehouse again soon. Here goes!"

"Have you any good or bad wine?"

"No; but my grandfather has some black boots."

"Have the bakers any good bread?"

"No; but my sister has cut down the tree."

"Have you the intention to buy a white horse?"

"No; but I have the woollen cap of my tailor's brother.

"I wonder whether Ollendorf was a Christian. He was certainly a very stupid man. Why couldn't he teach two things at the same time? German and Christianity. What is a Christian?"

"Answer: A Christian is a man who does not spit at his neighbour. Ollendorf would have replied, 'I do not know, but my mother-in-law is wearing the yellow shawl of the clergyman's pastry cook.' I wonder if I can put that into German.

"What is a Christian? *Was ist ein Christ? Ein Christ ist der welcher seinen Nachbahr nicht anspücht.*"

"Hullo, Spikes, so you've turned up first. Come in."

"Spikes" was the *nom de plume* of one of the most brilliant writers in *Vox Populi* and a great friend of Vincent's.

"What's the pater want with us to-day, Vinney?"

"It's a special meeting, I believe, arising out of the Park lecture," said Vincent.

"I hope your father's not going on with that atheist business and 'Father John' as they call him. He'll ruin *Vox* if he does."

"What do you want him to do? Become a Christian or shut up talking?"

"Shut up, of course. It does us a lot of harm. There are such a confounded lot of these Labour men who call themselves Christians and they don't like the pater's Atheism."

"He prefers to call it Secularism. I don't think he has made up his mind that there's no God. By Secularism he means 'for this world only.'"

"That's all right. But still I think it's best to keep off this religious controversy and get on with Socialism."

"I say, Spikes, can you keep a secret?"

"Good Lord! No, I never could."

"Then I'll tell you one. I am thinking of becoming a Christian."

"Bless my grandmother's green silk stockings!"

"What a silly oath that is of yours. It's as bad as Ollendorf."

"You must excuse me, Vinney, but you quite took my breath away. Now, who the dickens has been putting this into your head? We shall have you going to Chapel P.S.A.'s and talking rot about 'Christianity the True Socialism,' and the bishops will get you to speak about 'The Church, the Mother of Freedom,' etc. etc."

"Well, why not, if it is so?" said Vincent. "But I shan't join the Dissenters, I shall be an Anglican."

"And a parson too, I suppose?"

"Perhaps!"

"You'll leave off wearing a red tie."

"Yes; a red scarf like the parsons wear will do just as well."

"You'll preach against the pater in the churches over the way."

"No, never," said Vincent.

"You'll say 'Dearly Beloved Brethren.'"

"Yes, and I shall mean it too!"

"You'll tell them to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their *betters*."

"Yes, to their *betters*; that is, those who are more good, not those who are more rich."

"You'll tell them to be content in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them."

"No, I shan't. I shall tell them to do their duty in that state of life unto which it *shall* please God to call them. A very different thing."

"Vinney, old chap, don't be in a hurry. We can't afford

to lose you. The pater's getting old, and between ourselves a bit stale. The *Vox* looks to you to save it."

"You won't lose me. I shall be a better Socialist than ever."

"But what kind of Socialist? Some of the bishops call themselves that. Will you swear to me, Vinney, that you won't rat? Will you be a Collectivist still? Will you go on and on and not rest content till the whole capitalist, competitive system is swept away?"

"I may go to work in a rather different way, but the ultimate aim will be the same."

"Will you desert the *Vox*?"

"Not unless the *Vox* deserts me. Hush, here's the pater. Not a word of this. If it comes out to-night, it must be at my word, not yours. If you feel inclined to speak and can't keep yourself in, say 'Bless my great-grandfather's blue gaiters,' or anything you like, but don't peach."

The ducks and green peas were duly eaten. Kitty was thanked on retiring to wash up, the pipes were lit, and the meeting began.

"Comrades," said Heathcote, "I have asked you here to-night for a special meeting to consider the future of *Vox*. It is only a small point, but yet it is an important one.

"I remember that when I began attacking Christianity in the *Vox*, some of you, Spikes for instance, and Morning Star and Sugarstick, to mention three only of our leading writers, were against me. Of course I don't want to insult you by suggesting that you have any secret liking for Christianity, but you thought it bad policy. Do you still think it so?"

"Why do you ask us?" said Spikes. "What has happened to make you wish to call the matter into question again?"

The real reason was that John Baptist Heathcote had

felt just a wee bit shaken by the events of the last two Sundays. It was not that Father John had convinced him at all, but the attitude of the crowd had made him wonder if after all to abuse Christianity was the best way of furthering Socialism. He put it like this:—

"I will tell you what is in my mind. I began the attack on Christianity first and foremost because I believe it to be a lie; secondly, because I believe that it comes in the way of Socialism and must be swept away like Toryism, Liberalism, Capitalism, and everything else of the kind. But I have a feeling that just at present people are still so confoundedly religious, that if they think Socialism means giving up religion, they will give up Socialism and stick to religion."

"That's exactly what Father Ball said in the Park," said Vincent.

"Was it?" said Heathcote. "I had forgotten."

"So you have adopted the reverend gentleman's suggestion, Mr. Editor," said Alfred Mayhew, *alias* the Morning Star.

"Not a bit of it," said Heathcote, somewhat nettled. "It's purely a matter of policy with me. I don't want to give it up. I am ready to sharpen my knife and stick it into this great carcase of Christianity again and again if you, my friends, give the word."

"Do you mean a dead carcase, father?" said Vincent. "If it's dead, leave it alone. It can't do any harm."

"I mean a dead carcase alive with capitalistic vermin," said Heathcote.

"Well, a knife's no good for vermin. You want a poison of some sort, some mysterious hidden liquid which will steal unperceived among the maggots and clear them all out before they know where they are. Your slashing knife only opens old wounds and breeds more vermin," said Vincent.

"Hang your subtle metaphors, Vinney; go on with your German and leave us to settle this. You're not on the staff."

"Yes, he is," said Spikes. "Vincent's one of us, and you will be a great fool, Mr. Editor, if you send him away."

"Well, then, let him stay and tell us what he thinks."

"Excuse my metaphors, father, and bear with me if I continue them. That carcase has set me thinking. You say Christianity is dead and you are occupied in clearing out the vermin which still cling round the old faith. What if the carcase is still alive all the time, and the vermin are stifling its life? What if this conventional Christianity, such as that of the Church paraders, is not the real thing at all but a horrible cancer that is eating out the vitals of the true religion of Jesus? If this be so, go on with your attacks, and the day will come when the old faith which once removed mountains will revive and do it again. But you must not do this as the enemy of Christianity, you must do it as its friend, its physician bent on healing not destruction. *Vox populi* will become *Vox Dei*.

"Father," he said, rising from his seat excitedly, "if you don't do it I shall. Whether in *Vox* or not I care not. It's madness to fight against religion. England's full of it. Father, you yourself are full of it, too. You are living in a country where the air is laden with the atmosphere of Christ. You can't help breathing it in. You taught me that all men are my brothers, but Christ taught it you. You told me the Bible was good in parts, I say it's good all through, for I've been reading it. You taught me to love justice. I tell you justice is God's law. I told you I would say the Lord's Prayer last Sunday, and I did. God heard my prayer. His kingdom is coming in my heart. There's a mysterious majesty of righteousness which is forcing me to bend before it and become its slave. And Christ, the glorious, loving Christ, is speaking to me



as He spoke to Saul of Tarsus. He is saying, 'Why persecutest thou Me?' I am certain of it. I cannot deceive you. I love you too much for that. I shall love you for ever, but there's One that bids me love Him even more. I am going to be a Christian."

"Confound the boy! I wish you'd go back to your German," said Heathcote.

"My German! What does that mean? It means that you are bent on sending me away from the Christian surroundings of an English university lest I should believe and live. You cannot do it. You have told me I have no free will. I know I have. I can choose my master. I choose Christ."

"Comrades," said Heathcote, "the boy is nervous and excited. He gets it from his grandmother. She was like it sometimes, though never so bad as that. It proves what I have often said, that religion's a disease."

"That's not original, guv'nor," said Spikes, with a grin.

He went on without noticing the interruption. "He has made it impossible for us to settle this question to-night. I think we had better adjourn this meeting. He has been upset by that parson. Curse him! I mean curse the parson, not my Vinney. No, I'd never curse him. But he'll get over it like he got over the mumps the other day."

"Shall we go?" said Sugarstick. "Would you rather we went or shall we play whist for a change?"

"I'll go," said Vincent. "Forgive me for the disturbance which I made. I'll go back and try the Ollendorf again, though my head aches. Father, shake hands and say good night. Forgive me if I have been disrespectful to you."

Something like a tear seemed to be glistening in John Baptist's eye as he bade his son good night.

As Vincent closed the door, Spikes thought he heard him mutter to himself, "It's not like mumps a bit."

## CHAPTER VI

### FENWICK

If you do not wish for His Kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it, you must work for it.—RUSKIN

THE Brothers of the Community of the Kingdom of God were at "recreation" in their delightful garden at Fenwick, near Ulleswater. They were as fine a set of men as the Church of England had ever produced. The interviewer of the *Daily Postbox* would have called them an "up-to-date" order of monks. A more reverent observer would have described them as up to God. The foundation of their life was prayer and Bible study, but that was the beginning not the end. It had always been their aim to watch the course of events in Church and State with a view to the practical application of what they learnt on their knees and in their cells. To them the Kingdom of God meant no mere dream of the future in a disembodied state, but the establishing of the Divine sovereignty in the hearts of living, active men and women here on earth in whatever occupation they might be engaged.

They believed that Jesus Christ was still at hand to heal the disorders of humanity, and that by the Spirit the Gospel life could still be reproduced in all its beauty and power. Christ had spoken of a Kingdom. He had gathered round Himself a band of simple-minded men and women, content to be humble and meek and charitable. He had

called forth from them the response of faith, of absolute trust, and in that faith they had found the Kingdom. God ruled over their hearts. When Christ had passed into the unseen sphere they believed that He had not left them but had sent them His Spirit to be with them, to guide them and to give them power to carry on His work of healing.

Our community simply believed that the same thing was still as great a reality in the twentieth century as in the first. If the Kingdom came then, it could come now. If the Spirit entered into faithful disciples then, He could enter into them now, and the same work could be done. "The Church" to these brothers was the modern representative of this same companionship of faithful men with Christ. Looking round upon humanity they saw the evils of society and believed that the old power of the Spirit of Christ could heal it.

But they saw also that the Church itself was not wholly true to the Gospel. No new Church was needed, but only the revival of the old one. Churchmen must be simple, faithful disciples of Christ, and the Kingdom would come. So they had banded themselves together into a community that should set itself by prayer, by meditation, and by study of the Bible to reproduce that blessed spiritual companionship with Christ.

One great blot on the Church's banner was the fact that there were many young men who, simply because they were poor, could not enter the ministry. It seemed to these Brothers a terrible reproach that when Christ was calling the poor men, the middle-class men to follow Him they found a barrier between them and Holy Orders. So they founded a college next door to their own house, where men could come to be trained for the priesthood at small cost, and yet should have the best education possible. That was one side of their work. On the other side, looking out into the world, they saw, as the Socialists

saw, and as Heathcote saw, the terrible results of the competitive system. They saw a new slavery arising, the slavery of sweated women and children; they saw the luxury and idleness of the rich, the amazing inequality in the distribution of wealth, by which the largest part of the land of England and the largest part of the money had got into the hands of a very small portion of the population, while the many millions were in destitution or on the verge of poverty. They saw this, and felt it was a national disease which Christ the great Healer could cure.

But they also saw what Heathcote did not see, that the evil was in men themselves, that sins such as covetousness and selfishness and want of love were at the bottom of the problem. So while some Christians, who ought to have known better, called their work "unspiritual," they set themselves to bring the power of Christ to bear on the matter. To them "spiritual" did not mean "bodiless" or "unearthly," it meant, in the words of a modern theologian, "the truly human, for a human being is the truest embodiment of the spiritual." Some of them were definitely Socialists because they thought that Socialism was the best political expression of the ideal of the Kingdom; but none of them, whether Socialist or not, believed that mere political Socialism could produce the Kingdom.

It is hoped that this description of the aims of the Community may help the reader to understand the significance of what follows.

The Brothers were at "recreation," that is, they were spending a quiet time of happy conversation and rest before going back to their work.

"Brothers," said the Superior, "I have just received a letter, which will, I am sure, interest you all." They gathered round him as he read the letter. It was in Father John's handwriting, and was headed "St. Martin's Mission, Limehouse."

"MY DEAREST BROTHER,

"I have some good news for you and the Community, and I have also a request to make of you, which I hope and feel sure you will grant. Young Vincent Heathcote has been converted to our beloved Lord and Master, and is under preparation for Holy Baptism.

"*Laus Deo.* I do not myself yet fully realise what this may mean for the cause, but something tells me it will have great results. First, understand what it does not mean. It does not mean his father's conversion, or anything like it. Let us go on praying for him, as you and I have done now for ten years or more.

"His father is very angry. (It is curious to find that John Baptist Heathcote can lose his temper, in spite of his assuring us six weeks ago in the *Vox* that he never has done so!) Yet he really loves Vincent so much and Vincent loves him so much that a complete breach is not to be expected. The family situation is, however, sufficiently serious. The father has saved up money to send him to some horrid place in Germany, where it was hoped he would become a complete atheist. Now, however, Heathcote will not send him. In fact, he would not, of course, go if he could.

"Another question arises. Shall he be ordained, or shall he continue his Socialist work as a layman? Jack and Barton and myself are all of one mind that he should take Orders. I think you will agree to this. As a layman he would be hampered by association with so many Socialists, who are either Secularists or else only half-baked Christians like Bunks. (By the way, dear old Bunks, who calls himself a Christian Socialist, told me in confidence the other day that he had never heard of Confirmation, and thought that the 'Sacrifices of Masses' in the Thirty-first Article referred to a man called 'Masses'! Do write an anonymous letter to Lady Loafer, and tell her this. Perhaps she would not see the joke, though.)

"Now, if Vincent prepares for Orders, he will get a much better grounding in Christian knowledge. (Excuse my interpolations, but I cannot resist telling you here that Lady Spicebox thought that S.P.C.K. meant 'Society for the *prevention* of Christian Knowledge.' Rather hard on the Primate who is the President!)

"Well, to return to Vincent. As a layman he will be wanting to rush into Socialist work without knowing where the Christianity comes in. This would be fatal. Remember what one of the Cowley Fathers said, 'Our aim is not municipal reform, but spiritual life.'

"If he went to Oxford, for example, he might join some society which wastes its time over feeble economics and forgets the Gospel. No, my dear brother, I am sure he must not go on as a layman. You know me well enough to be sure that I say this not because I want our movement to be a clerical movement, but because I feel that in his particular case he can do more good as a priest. Lay Socialist work such as men like Kesterton and Barton do is, of course, invaluable. We want hundreds more of such fellows as they. But Vincent Heathcote! Oh, when you know him as I do you will see at once what a splendid priest he will be.

"Now of course by this time you will have gathered at what I am driving. I want you to have him at Fenwick. He is well forward with his classics and mathematics. He is devoted to history, and will do you all credit. One word more. Vincent is a tremendous catch for the Church, not simply because he is Heathcote's son, but because he is head and shoulders above all the other *Vox* writers in real solid knowledge. If Heathcote dies or retires he can only be succeeded by his son. Fancy old *Vox* being edited by a parson!

"By the way, if any money is needed Barton will supply it. He has just come in for another fortune from

his aunt, Lady Pummice, and he wants to lay it at the apostle's feet—that is, of course, yours. Love to all the brethren.

“Your ever affectionate

“JOHN.”

“Before we discuss this letter,” said the Superior, “we will go into chapel and sing a *Te Deum*. God is very good to us.”

It was difficult for the Brothers to settle down again to work that day. The news of Vincent's conversion was to them like the final achievement of a new invention must be to a man of science. It was for this kind of thing that they prayed and laboured day by day. They had a right to rest and enjoy themselves. Brother Mark, who was the most advanced Socialist of the Community, was beside himself with joy. Already he was speculating as to the contents of the first number of *Vox* when it should have become a Christian paper. Already he pictured to himself Vincent Heathcote preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral, addressing Church congresses and Trades Union congresses. Already he beheld Mammon falling from his throne, a Labour Party majority, a universal eight hours day, Church festivals and workpeople's holidays thrown into one, Trades Guilds revived with their chapels and chaplains, bishops setting free the oppressed white slaves of England, artisans and labourers crowding to Holy Communion, the whole land of Great Britain and Ireland under proper cultivation and yielding food for the people, workhouses razed to the ground, provision for the peace and comfort of all old people.

“Brother Mark,” said the Superior, “if you go on like that, I shall send you for a long holiday to South Africa when Vincent comes. You would make him very conceited, and if he becomes that, then all your castles in the air will vanish into smoke.”

## CHAPTER VII

### A PLOT

Christianity is social, and that is why every Christian should be a Socialist: but Christianity is also individual, and that is why every Socialist should be a Christian.—ENID STACEY, I.L.P.

“HE must be a delicious person to know and all that, Barty. Do let us have him at Alabaster in the Christmas holidays. It will be so original, you know, to introduce a real Socialist and a Churchman to the Dean of Doncaster, and the bishops, and those sort of old fogies. I love shocking people; don’t you, Barty? We’ll make up a large house party of every kind of person, with views and no views. We’ll stick young Vincent Heathcote in the middle and make him talk. What fun!”

It was Lady Spicebox who spoke as she sat on the balcony in Dukery Square, fanning herself with a copy of *Vox Populi*.

“I am not sure,” said Lord Barton, “that the Superior will allow him to come. You see, they are very strict at Fenwick, and he might be contaminated by too much contact with smart people, such as you will get round him at Alabaster Court.”

“Well, you must try your best to secure him.”

“Do you think Sir Joscelyn will mind him?” asked Barton. “You must remember he is not quite what you and your set call a gentleman.”

“For shame, Barty; you know I am a sort of Socialist, and all that. I don’t care what Jossy says. Still, of



course, he must have evening clothes, and plenty of white shirts, and all that. The servants talk so much if any one comes to stay who isn't quite the thing. Bunks stayed with us once, and got his trousers wet in the rain. He hadn't any more to put on. And one night he did not turn up at evening dinner, because, as he said, he wasn't hungry! Of course, Heathcote needn't hunt, and he needn't play bridge. You'll keep him in countenance about that, though it's easier for you, because you're a lord. What can he do besides talking Socialism? Can he sing, or play, or draw, or what?"

"He plays and sings superbly and draws caricatures."

"That's all right. He'll do. Now let's think things out. Who shall we have besides? Shall we mix up this party with theatricals, or shall we keep it distinct? That dear thing Poppy Oliphant, who acts so well, wants to get up a play at Christmas, quite small, you know, and all that."

"It depends," said Barton, "on the capacities of Alabaster Court. Will there be room for the Dean, the bishops, the actors, the Socialists, yourselves, myself, and a duchess or two?"

"I think so," said Lady Spicebox. "The Derwentwaters might have a party, too, to help us out. They are close by. The Dean, and others, might stay with them."

"Well now, whom do you want me to ask?" said Lord Barton, who was quite accustomed to sending out the invitations for her ladyship. "You can manage the aristocracy, and I will get the democratic section for you."

"I think I'd like Bunks."

"He certainly has no evening clothes," said Barton.

"How does he manage, then, when he goes to the Speaker's dinner! You must get him his togs at the same time as you get Heathcote's. Nathan's will provide."

"Then there's Kesterton. Of course, he must come to

represent the new Liberal-Labour element. Shall we have an old-fashioned Liberal? Let's try for a Cabinet Minister."

"Capital," said Lady Spicebox. "Now I'll have a try. The Smart Set will be represented by the Hatcham woman and her daughter, the *nouveaux riches* by Lord Haypence and Mr. Vandertrust. I don't know what Jossy will say if the weather's good, for not a Jack man of the lot knows anything about horseflesh."

"I should think Vandertrust knows a jolly sight too much about horseflesh. You forget," said Barton, "he's a sausage-maker."

"My dear Barty, it's rats with him; horses are too good."

"And now for the ecclesiastical set," said Barton. "You nominate two and I'll nominate two more."

"All right," said Lady Spicebox.

"*Wanted*: one moderate High Church. Safe man, in with the smart people, presentable in appearance, clean in the house, Tory in politics, easily bowled out by a Socialist. Mr. Smilepeace of St. Silas'. That's one.

"*Wanted*: one Protestant parson. Must be well connected. Not too blatant. No tracts given away at meals. I know! Canon Trefusis. He's got a moustache, and he's heir-presumptive to Boldmere Castle. That's my second."

"Now," said Barton, "you've forgotten the bishops. I think one's enough. Let's have the Bishop of Swampton and not the Dean. He calls himself a Christian Socialist. Then for number four I would have a Broad Churchman, say Canon Pixley. We haven't got a Ritualist. What shall we do?"

"Oh, Poppy Oliphant will do for that," said Lady Spicebox. "He combines ritualism and theatricals."

"Now, Gladys," said Lord Barton (he had known her from childhood and always called her by her Christian

name), "we have talked worldliness enough for this morning, I am now going to speak of more serious things. You know I have always complained that you do not think seriously enough about Christian Socialism."

"Yes, I know, Barty; but please remember it's very hot, and it's nearly tea time, and the Hatchams will very likely turn up about five."

"Right you are, Gladys, I'll be merciful. I want to know first of all. Did you think much about what Father John said in the Park on that eventful Sunday, or did it all go out of your mind as soon as it was over? It struck me at lunch afterwards at the Derwentwaters' you were somewhat frivolous in the way you talked."

"I could not help chaffing the Dean. He's so pompous and all that."

"But do you think we shall ever get rich people to take us seriously if we joke too much about the matter? Is not the whole thing either a huge farce, or else a matter of eternal life or eternal death?"

"Barty dear, I know I am frivolous, but I am better than I used to be. I know I am very ignorant, and between ourselves the *Vox* rather bores me. You are so good about it all. You are at the very top of the social scale. You might be a leader of fashion. You have deliberately chosen to sacrifice your wealth. I am not worthy to lace your boots. But don't expect me to do quite as you do yet. I am too weak."

"Dear Gladys, I know it is very difficult, and I don't want you to do anything very extraordinary, at least not at present. Some day perhaps you will have to make a bigger sacrifice. Just now your duty is obvious. You have a husband and a large estate to look after."

"You too have got a large estate, but you have given it all up in alms for the poor and for your Socialist schemes. Oh, I wish I was as good as you."

"Don't talk about me. I can assure you I am ashamed of myself for not doing more. It has cost me nothing. I never cared about London society. I have only done what any Christian ought to do who receives a call. Our Lord called me when I was left an orphan, and without any brothers and sisters. He spoke to me in the Gospel at Holy Communion one day. He told me to give up all, and I have tried to do it. Now I am talking about myself, and I want instead to try to help you."

"What must I do?" said Lady Spicebox tearfully. "I am really trying to be a Socialist, at least, a—sort of—Socialist. You, Barty, have taught me all I know and the *V—v—vox.*"

"Yes, darling, I know that, and I thank God for it. But I want you to realise that we are not playing a game. We are taking part in a death struggle. I am convinced that we are approaching a great revolution in England. It won't be a bloody one like the French Revolution, nor will it be like that which is going on in Russia. It will go on gradually and quietly, but it will be a revolution all the same. On the one hand you have the upper classes living heedless, careless lives. I do not speak of the immorality, though there is plenty of that. There is impurity, there is dishonesty, there is heartless cruelty going on in this very square, as you and I know well enough. But besides all that, there is the most abandoned luxury, and idleness, and pleasure seeking. Even religious people are extraordinarily careless of their Christian profession. Then, on the other hand, you have the masses of the working class. I don't mean the very poor only, but that great horde of working people who are supplying us with all the necessities of life and the unnecessaries too. Their life is a maimed life. They are deprived of proper education, sufficient leisure, and a hundred other things which we rightly think good for ourselves. Then between us there is the middle class,

groaning under rates and taxes which it pays grudgingly without deriving much benefit for itself."

"You talk like the *Vox*, Barty. Just listen to this. 'Eight millions are on the borders of starvation. Twenty millions are poor. Only a few thousand people own half the land of the country.'"

"Quite so," said Lord Barton. "This cannot go on for ever. All sorts of schemes and plans are in the air to make things better. To me, and I think to you, so far as you have considered it, Socialism seems the scheme in which there is most hope. But here we are met with a great difficulty. Numbers of Socialists are like Heathcote, the Editor of *Vox*, Secularists and even opposed to Christianity. Those who, like our friend Bunks, call themselves Christians do not bring their religion into their Socialism, but think it something quite distinct and disconnected from their political work. Again, the vast majority of Christians in this country are against Socialism, even though some may be very much interested in other kinds of social reform.

"Now, which kind of Socialist is to guide and lead the revolution? Shall it be the Secularist or the Christian? You, Gladys, I know, want to join with us. But I warn you it will mean hard times and persecution, before we succeed. It won't be only the rich who will be against us. It will be the middle class and most of the average, moderate Christian bodies. We may joke about it in drawing-rooms, we may treat it lightly in pulpits. The time is not far distant when that will have to cease and give way to something more like the Cross of Christ."

"You quite alarm me, Barty. I hope this doesn't mean that we must not have our Christmas meeting at Alabaster. Remember, you have almost promised to send out those invitations."

"Oh no, Gladys, I don't think any harm will come of that. I don't mind a little fun. Father John, who, as you know, is my beau ideal of a parson, is full of jokes. It's all right as long as we keep before us the ultimate seriousness of that with which we are dealing. We must pray more. Do you pray, Gladys?"

"I wish you would not ask me that, Barty. I say my prayers every morning and evening out of Bishop Walsham How's book, but I don't think I have ever mentioned the social revolution in my prayers. I go to Communion once a month after Matins at St. Silas', but I don't think it does me any good."

"Gladys, I feel inclined to tell you that you mustn't have that Christmas party until you have been into Retreat."

"Oh, Barty, don't say that. I'll promise to be very good indeed, long before the revolution begins!"

Lord Barton smiled and said, "I think you have had enough for one day. Now here comes no less a person than Sir James Hornby, the Cabinet Minister; I am sure that's his carriage."

"Good heavens, Barty, my hair's all in a mess and Jossy's out. For goodness' sake don't leave me if he stays to tea."

He did stay to tea and Lord Barton did not desert her.

For ten minutes Lady Spicebox tried to be very serious indeed with the great man, as befitted the wife of a Liberal country gentleman who subscribed, as Sir Joscelyn did, generously to the party funds.

Sir James was a bit annoyed to find that Sir Joscelyn was out, and he disliked the presence of Lord Barton who would not give a penny in support of the Government, and when he made a public speech was generally worse than a Tory.



He was somewhat snappish when Lady Spicebox began asking him about the School Children's Clothing Bill, which the Labour Party had brought in, and which the Liberal Government were afraid of.

"What will come next, Sir James?" said Lady Spicebox.

"Sugar," he growled, and helped himself from the basin without tongs, showing thereby that he had been educated at the University.

"Oh, I meant in Parliament," she said.

"Good gracious, Lady Spicebox, how can anybody know what's coming next in any Parliament?"

"You know I am a Socialist, Sir James. Jossy doesn't half like it, you know, and all that."

Barton looked at her as much as to say "Be careful, you're treading on dangerous ground."

"Yes, I've heard you are," said Sir James, "and I am sorry for it."

"But, Sir James, I'm sure your party had better not quarrel with us. Socialism, you know, is the coming power. Listen to this from the *Vox Populi*.

"In a very few years there will be no Liberal party as we know it now. The Liberal-Labour men like Kesterton will come over to us, and we shall then turn the Liberals out. The parties of the future will be Labour versus Capital, or Socialism versus Toryism. Look at that muddle-headed old fool, Sir——"

She stopped short as she found she was reading "Spikes" on "Sir James Hornby."

"What possesses sane people like you, Lord Barton, and you, Lady Spicebox, to go in for Socialism? Do you understand that it may mean an entire *bouleversement* of everything, and you will no longer be able to live in Dukery Square?"

"But what," said Lord Barton, "if we do not think

Dukery Square the *summum bonum* of existence? What if we prefer giving up our present comfortable position in order to set free the main body of the nation to live a proper, well-nourished, well-educated, well-provided life, which it cannot do now?"

"Of course I need not say to you, Lord Barton, that what I am speaking now is *in camera*, and must not be made public. Nothing will be gained by precipitate action, such as is recommended by the Labour Party. Why cannot people see that the traditions of the Liberal Party are all on the side of social reform?"

"But is that the case?" inquired Barton. "What about the factory legislation of the forties, the very foundation of modern social reform? What was the attitude of the 'Manchester school' of Liberals towards that? Is it not true to say that the old Liberalism meant Individualism, the very opposite to Socialism?"

"Yet we gave you political freedom and the votes which have put your party into power."

"That's largely true, but don't you think that this freedom of the individual which Liberals worship so much has resulted in a greater slavery than ever for the bulk of the wage-earning classes? A workman is not much more free to bargain with his labour than he used to be. And look at the sweated trades! Look at the women! Are they free?"

"Well, I don't think Socialism will bring freedom, at least not by itself. In fact, it won't come about at all without the help of Liberalism."

"Sir James, I differ with you and I agree with you also. I don't think it will come about by itself, nor yet by the help of Liberalism. But I do think it will come about by the help of Christianity."

"Yes, Sir James," chimed in Lady Spicebox, "we are Christian Socialists and all that, you know."



"That's just what I cannot understand," said Sir James. "Christian Socialism seems to me a contradiction in terms."

"Really, Sir James," said Lady Spicebox, "Christianity and Socialism to me are synonymous."

"Now a truce to politics! Will you lunch at Lord's with us on Saturday, and come and stay at Alabaster next Christmas?"

"I'll certainly come at Christmas, but I am off for a week end to Brighton, and cannot come to the match."

"Was I serious enough, Barty?" she said after the great man had gone.

"Not bad for you, Gladys," he replied.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRISTMAS

And art Thou come for saving, baby browed  
And speechless Being—art Thou come for saving?  
Art Thou a King, then? Come, His universe,  
Come, crown me Him a King!—E. B. BROWNING

IT was Vincent's first vacation since he had gone to Fenwick College. Though he was now of age, he had all the instincts of a schoolboy, and it was with a heart full of wildest joy and expectation that he jumped out of the train at Euston and found himself in dear old London again. He was to spend the beginning of his holiday at Limehouse, and then by leave of the Superior he was to go to Alabaster Court. But first of all he wished to go home to Yeast Lodge, Walthamstow, for a few hours to see Kitty Barnes and his father.

No one knew better than Vincent himself what a blow to his father the conversion had been. It was not so much the conversion to Christianity as the fact that Vincent was as firm a Socialist as ever that troubled Heathcote. He could not point to his son and say, "There, I told you so. He has become a Christian, and that has put an end to his Socialism." So far from this, Vincent seemed more of a Socialist than ever. He was certainly more enthusiastic and earnest about it than before.

Again, the conversion had created an uncomfortable feeling in the home. Father and son could not talk freely with each other. Even old Mrs. Barnes found her-

self not quite on the old terms with Vincent. The last six weeks before he had gone to Fenwick had been a prolonged *mauvais quart d'heure* for all three inhabitants of Yeast Lodge.

The tragedy had told too upon Heathcote's articles in *Vox*. The old lightness of touch, the humour, the breezy confidence, the dogmatic assertiveness had perceptibly diminished. The quotations and illustrations with which Vincent had so often supplied him were now absent and Spikes was in weekly despair at the Editor's copy.

Heathcote was angry too that the news of his son's conversion had got into the Church newspapers, and had been preached about in chapels and cathedrals. It is only fair to the Community of the Kingdom of God and to Father John Ball to say that they had done their best to keep it out of the public Press. They had no wish to make it known as yet. Heathcote had been forced to refer to it in *Vox*, and he did it very badly. Instead of merely recording it, he scoffed and raged and ridiculed the priests, who, he said, were so proud of their capture. "These fishers of men," he said, "have caught a sprat and they are mighty pleased, but they haven't got the whale yet."

In Hyde Park too he had been obliged to confess the reason of Vincent's absence, and the "Little Horn" had, with great glee, pointed to a chapter and verse in the book of Jeremiah which was evidently a prophecy of the event. All this had called forth a correspondence in the columns of *Vox*, which was still going on when Vincent came home for the vacation.

It was not, then, with very comfortable feelings that the young Fenwick student knocked at the door of Yeast Lodge that December afternoon. Kitty's welcome was warm. Here was her darling boy back again, and she forgot for the moment what had occurred. John Baptist,

the other hand, could not forget it, and shook hands

with his son almost as stiffly as if it had been a Liberal Prime Minister whom he was greeting.

Vincent, who was seldom at a loss for a word, found himself practically dumb for a few minutes. What could he say? He dared not refer to *Vox*. He racked his brain to find any subject on which he could talk to his father. At last he was obliged to talk about the weather and the train. He remarked that it was cold, almost as cold as that time last year, though it might have been ninety degrees in the shade for all he remembered about last Christmas. He even committed the dismal platitude of saying that Christmas would soon be there. He said that the trains were crowded, that they usually were at that time of the year, that the North Western was better than the Midland for getting about, and lastly he returned to the weather, and wondered whether it would freeze again that night.

And all his father said was, "Think so?"

Kitty at last relieved the tension by bringing in tea. Where everything else had failed, hot muffins succeeded, and with his mouth full of them John Baptist actually asked Vincent how he was getting on.

It might be freezing out of doors, but inside Yeast Lodge the ice was broken. Vincent began to describe a day at Fenwick College. He told his father how early they got up. He omitted details about the chapel services, thinking that Heathcote would not know what Terce and Sext signified. He piled it on about their studies of philosophy, political economy, history, and the rest. Theology, like the offices, he kept in the background. Remembering that his father was a materialist, he enlarged upon the softness of the mattresses and the beauty of the beef and plum pudding. Then he pictured the mountains and the lakes and quoted a little Wordsworth and a little Ruskin.

"Hang you, you lucky chap," said Heathcote, quite in his old style.

Then there was silence, more munching of Kitty's muffins, and a mixing of more hot water with the Mazza-wattee. John Baptist was thinking about the finance. Was it not rather mean that the editor of *Vox*, with a circulation of one hundred thousand a week, should be having his son educated at the expense of a bloated Capitalist, to wit, Lord Barton?

"Look here! Vinney," he said at last, "if you are hard up for a quid or two at any time, remember you can draw on me."

"Thanks, pater," said Vincent, thinking it best not to pursue the subject any further for the present. "May I sleep here to-night? I shall be going to Limehouse to-morrow."

"Why, certainly," said Heathcote, though with a slight curl of the lip as he thought of Father John.

As he undressed that night, Vincent could not help wondering at the meaning of the Lord's words, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me. If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Far into the night he prayed for his father, for Kitty, for the staff of the *Vox*, for the Community, for Ball, for Lord Barton, for Kesterton, for the blessing of God upon his future ministry.

He forgot that the partition between his room and Heathcote's was very thin. He thought he was in his cell at Fenwick, where the walls were thick. Had he been on the other side, he would have seen his father listening. Had he followed him downstairs at 2 a.m., he would have seen him go to his desk, take out from



it an article he had written for the next number of *Vox* on "The Absurdities of Prayer," tear it up, burn it in the candle, and then set to work to write another on "The Taxation of Ground Values."

Early next morning Vincent left for Limehouse to spend the Christmas festival with Father Ball and Kesterton and the congregation of St. Martin's Mission, many of whom were fast friends of his. During the time of his preparation for baptism, he had made acquaintance with East London, both its social and more strictly ecclesiastical affairs. He had come to love both the place and the people, as all do who live there for any length of time and take part in philanthropic work. There is a homeliness about the east. The people are practically all of one class: there is a more distinctive character about them than about Londoners of other districts. They have been comparatively isolated, and have built up a social life of their own. Nothing had surprised Vincent more than to find, as he did after staying there a few weeks, how large a place the Church of England filled in East-End society. It was not that there were a great many church-goers or communicants, except at places like St. Martin's Mission, but rather that in every social organisation, whether a Board of Guardians, a Working Men's Club, a Temperance Society, or what not, you were sure to find a prominent representative or two of the Church.

Vincent had come primed up with the scornful sneers of the *Vox* about the uselessness of the parsons, their luxury, their idleness, the futility of their work, and the rest. He found they were doing more in East London for social reform than any other set of men. All this strengthened his belief in his new religion, and he longed for the day when he should have the privilege of being one of its ministers.

His heart was overflowing with joy as he walked briskly

in the cold morning air through Leytonstone and Stratford, looking in to greet some of his friends among the self-denying friars of the Society of the Divine Compassion at Plaistow, saying a prayer for them and their work in their little church, and asking them to pray for his father and for him; paying another visit to the clergy of the Christ Church, Oxford Mission at Poplar, and thanking God for the work being done there by our ancient university, pitying the miserable crowd of casual dockers loafing round the East India Dock gates, and vowing that he would never desert the cause of the helpless victims of our great social machine.

At last before him he saw the well-known board nailed up against a crazy-looking house in Gehazi's Rents, on which was written, "St. Martin's Mission House—Clergy can be seen at all hours of day or night."

"Mornin', Mister Effcut," said the kids, as they clustered round him while he knocked at the muddy door.

"Good morning, Bert! Good morning, Sid! Good morning, Lizzie!" he said, making shots at the names which he remembered most frequently to have found in the registers of the Catechism or Lads' Brigade.

"Where's the Father?" This to Mrs. Buttles, the handy woman at the Mission House, and one of the best known "characters" in St. Martin's district.

"Bless me if it ain't Brother Effcut, which as how you're lookin' bonnier than ever as the Lakes is more healthy nor Lime'us, which as Buttles went to Windymere with a 'scursion not six month afore 'e died and took the brown kilters that bad which as Farver's gone to 'Ounds-ditch to buy the tree things with Brother Kesterton."

"Where am I to sleep, Mrs. Buttles?" said Vincent; "I think I'll put my bag there, and wait till Father comes in."

"You'll 'ave to share with them sailors as Farver's got evenin' for Christmas, which as how Jack's as clean as

paint, an' yer needn' fear, which as a priest who came from Oxford last Sunday did say as 'ow 'is bed wanted looking to, which as it's the first as ever were found in the Mission House since I came here, which as the priest must 'ave brought it on 'im from them trams, which as the Jews ain't as clean as they might be."

"Has Lord Barton been down here lately?" asked Vincent.

He put his questions as shortly as possible, knowing from experience that Mrs. Buttles occupied a considerable time in replying.

"His lordship, bless him, was down last Sunday at the mornin' service, which as 'e brought Lady Spicebox, which has 'ow 'er ladyship washed 'er 'ands in my bedroom, 'an collarmended me on my puddin', and said as my tresanthy-buns in the conservatry were like a hasus in the dessert."

"Will you let me get you a Christmas box, Mrs. Buttles?" said Vincent. "What would you like?"

"Well I'm sure, Brother Vincent, that's remarkable kind on yer, which as how Farver's gin me a crosby shawl, as it's better nor what you get in the Road, as I'd like a new 'im book, as the numbers wus all wrong, which as how Farver's made a change as they talks about welks at the choir practus, as at Christmas we allers used to say 'erald Angils as the waits 'ud play outside Squire's 'ouse until 'e sent 'em away wi' arf a crown as ud buy 'em a nice warm cumfitter each in the frosty weather."

Vincent was quite unable to discover from this what the good lady wanted, but he promised he'd get it for her all the same.

"Dear old Buttles," thought Vincent, "it's worth coming to Limehouse to hear her alone. I wonder if she's a Socialist. I never asked her yet. I'd like her to meet Aunt Kittens. The two together would be as good as a play."



"Hurrah! Here's Vinney," said a cheery voice at the door, as John Ball and Kesterton returned home laden with boxes for the Christmas tree.

"Gi'e us a cracker, Farver," cried the kids.

"Garn with you," said Ball. "I want to speak to Brother Heathcote."

But there was not much time just then to talk to Vincent. In fact, what with superintending the decorations of the little church, snatching a moment here and a moment there to visit a sick person, and helping the men, women, and children to prepare for the next day's Communion, Father Ball had no time to give to his guests that Christmas Eve.

"Let's have a walk in Commercial Road," said Kesterton to Vincent.

"I am your man," he replied, and they sallied out after tea to inspect the Christmas preparations.

What a sight it was! Butchers' shops laden with fat carcasses of beasts, garlanded with holly, and surrounded by wistful, hungry crowds waiting till a farthing or two per pound should be taken off the prices; barrows, some strewn with Christmas cards and crackers, others stocked with mistletoe and holly and little spruce trees; 'Arry and 'Arriet arm in arm, he with her hat on and she with his, he playing a Jew's harp and she the giddy goat; taverns blazing with gas lamps reflected in myriads of vulgar mirrors and crammed to overflowing with men and women standing, elbowing one another and quaffing more and more of poisonous beer and burning whisky.

"Listen to that," said Vincent, as they stopped where a little boy was singing "While shepherds watched their flocks by night" to the accompaniment of a small harmonium.

"Is not that symbolical of the whole social situation to-day? Here is the world all round us, nominally Chris-

tian, 'keeping Christmas,' as they would say, if you asked them. This little boy in the midst, with his Gospel message of peace and goodwill, is the little Jesus as He came nineteen hundred years ago. But they don't listen. Each goes his way, one to his beer, another to his merchandise. Here, little boy, what's your name and where do you live?"

"Christopher, sir, and I live in Lime'us."

"Anywhere near Father John's?"

"Yes, close by."

"Here's sixpence for you; come to church to-morrow."

"Right you are, sir. Thank 'e, sir."

"Christopher!" said Vincent, "that's a good name, isn't it? He's bearing the Holy Child across the dark river—the Commercial Road."

They bent their steps homeward.

"Now you see, don't you, Vinney," said Kesterton, "what we meant when we declined to accept your father's identification of modern society and Christianity. Our Lord is still almost alone in the world, even in a so-called Christian country. The Holy Family, the shepherds, the wise men: just a few recognise Him."

"Yes," said Vincent, "and those who did hail Him at the first Christmas were some of them such unlikely people. The religious people, the Pharisees and Sadducees, knew Him not. The state authorities, the Herods and the Cæsars, ignored Him. The weird watchers from the East, the simple poor shepherds, poor and loving and ignorant found Him. What think you, Jack? Will the strange Socialists and the poor, ignorant, striving, struggling workers find Him again in dear England, while the official Church and the politicians lose Him?"

"Who knows?" said Kesterton.

## CHAPTER IX

### BETHLEHEM

And yet, and yet, between the slough of life,  
Between the gutters of the meaner streets,  
And the far summits of the world's success,  
Are silent battlefields where souls are made,  
And sunny gardens visited by God :  
And there are glories which no gold can buy,  
Which poor men sometimes seek and sometimes win.

R. C. MACFIE

VINCENT loved to live among the Church people around St. Martin's Mission. He would often say that it was the atmosphere of practical Christianity at St. Martin's which had done more than anything else to complete his conversion. John Ball had lived there for twenty years, and had gathered round him a company of disciples with something of the same spirit as that of the early Christians or the first Franciscan brothers and sisters of penitence. He had taken as his motto the famous expression of his fourteenth-century namesake, the parson leader of the Peasants' Revolt, "Fellowship is heaven: lack of fellowship is hell." He tried to realise the ideal life of the Book of Common Prayer within the circle of the parish which he believed God had committed to his care. The basis of this life is Holy Baptism. His flock were to him his "dearly beloved brethren," united to him as to each other in the great family of God, brought once into living contact with the Son of Man as His members, however maimed that contact might have become by

after sin; inheritors, that is, rightful possessors of the "Kingdom of Heaven," looking for and believing in the recognition of God's sovereignty over the whole of human society here and now, and therefore expecting to see it in Limehouse as much as anywhere else.

With Ball nothing was secular except what was sinful, as the Bishop who ordained him had reminded him one day. Therefore he would help the men and women in all their rightful aspirations after a happier social life as part of his religious duty. He thought it not incongruous to go from baptizing a baby or hearing a confession of sin to play in a cricket match with his boys or to take the chair at a trades union meeting. He liked to be called "Father" by the congregation because he knew that if they did not look upon him as such it was his own fault, and on the other hand, if they meant it, it was as it should be. He disliked the use of this title when employed as a nickname by bitter Protestants, because it implied that he was lording it over his flock, which he would have thought it a wicked thing to do.

Twenty years of John Ball's ministry had produced a new type of Churchman in the place. Children who had grown up to manhood and womanhood in his company and under his teaching knew nothing of the absurd controversies which disturb our English Christianity. They did not understand what the Protestant lecturers meant when they came to Gehazi's Rents and told them that John Ball was a filthy-minded scoundrel, who was breaking up the family life in the district, that he was eating the bread of the Establishment while in the pay of the Pope of Rome, that he did not believe in the sacrifice of our Blessed Lord on the cross, or that he never read the Bible, and did not want them to read it.

They knew him as a loving father, who had taught them to keep their houses decent and pure, who found

fault with Mr. Gehazi when he refused to mend the drains, or drove them to live ten in a room in order to get more rent ; they knew him as a man who, if he had any bread (" Establishment bread " or not), would share it with any one in the place who was starving ; they knew that he got his money for St. Martin's Mission from the St. Martin's people themselves, and not from the Pope. They gave their pennies to the collection, because they thought it was their duty to God, and it was all accounted for in the little red book that came out every year, and was presented to each of the nine hundred communicants. As for the Bible, they had seen him reading it every morning, and they read and loved it, and understood it themselves, because he had taught them to do so. Most of all did they know him as a believer in the sacrifice of our Lord. Sunday by Sunday they would gather round the Lord's Table in the early morning to show the Lord's death till He come. The Lord's Supper was to them the great public proclamation made before the whole assembly every week that there is but one way to God through Him who lived and died and rose again, and lives for us for ever.

And all this was believed in and practised in close connection with their every-day life. It was not only John Ball who thought he was doing a religious act in heading a trades union, but the Socialist working men themselves, who belonged to St. Martin's, believed that their communions joined them together in one, and enabled them to realise the brotherhood of men of which they so often spoke.

Jealousies between one class and another of skilled and unskilled labourers, antagonisms between the " respectable " and the " not respectable " were few and far between in St. Martin's. It was not surprising, then, to find that the worship at the little church was hearty in the best



sense. There was no choir, for the whole body of communicants sang out of the fulness of their hearts what they really felt in praise and adoration of the Lord. The ritual was no mere piece of acting at which the congregation looked on as at a play. The whole of the men and boy communicants took part in it in rotation month by month. When they offered incense they knew what it meant. It meant that they were symbolically pleading the merits of the Lamb of God. When they lit lights they knew they were doing it for joy, an illumination to do honour to the King of kings. When they saw the Father dressed in a jewelled cope they were pleased, because it was smarter than what the Mayor of Limehouse wore, and they considered John Ball a much more important person, and his work a much more important work. Had not the mayor refused to give work to the unemployed, while the Father had pleaded their cause with the Local Government Board?

Even Lady Loafer, when she came to inspect the little church, was impressed, and remarked to Sir Martyn that it was "not nearly so disgustin' as most." She did not, however, like being asked by the churchwarden if she was converted, nor did she relish the remark of a little child which she overheard, "Is that lidy a Christian? She don't kneel down when she says her prayers, daddy. Por lidy!"

It was never said of John Ball's congregation, "The people don't mind his having these services because they love him so much for what he does outside the Church." He insisted that the people should have the services when and because they loved God themselves. If a service was not the expression of what they believed and loved, he would not encourage them to take part in it. When a Socialist, for example, attracted by Ball's political work, or by his street-preaching, took to coming to St. Martin's

he was not allowed to be present at the Lord's Supper until he had been instructed. "You are a Communist," he said once to such a man. "I will make you a Holy Communist, and then you will understand Holy Communion."

The Sunday evening instructions at St. Martin's were in some ways the greatest of all the agencies for good. Lady Spicebox, who frequently attended them, said she had learnt more from one of them than from fifty sermons in her own church in Dukery Square. "Yet," she said, "we West-enders are supposed not to need missions nor to have our children instructed in religion!"

Perhaps John Ball was more successful with the children than any others. The best men and women of his congregation had grown up under his tutorship. He had a great respect for "the kids," and would always let them teach him rather than thrust his own views down their little throats. By continually asking them to define things for him he had arrived at an extraordinary knowledge of the Limehouse child-mind. His Sunday Children's Service was his own education. "What is a saint?" he would ask. Then one after another the little ones gave him their ideas.

"Please, sir, a follower of Jesus Christ."

"Please, sir, one who dies for his religion."

"One who serves Christ."

"One who does a lot of praying."

"One who sticks up for Jesus."

"I know, sir, please sir, one who thinks of God."

"Please, sir, one who never sins."

"One who doesn't tell lies."

"One who don't steal."

"One who follows God."

Another day, after having had a morning at the Dock gates with the Secularists, and smarting a little under their

sneers about his "teaching the kids about Heaven in the skies," he asked the children to tell him what they thought they would do in Heaven.

"Please, sir, we'll praise God."

"Live a peaceful life."

"Please, sir, we'll roam the country."

"I know, sir, we'll exercise ourselves."

Lady Spicebox, who happened to be present, inquired afterwards what this child meant by thinking that in Heaven they would exercise themselves.

John Ball explained that it was probably because he was perpetually teaching the children about exercising their bodies and keeping themselves in good health.

"For example," he said, "when a new scholar presents himself at our church, we ask him how old he is, what his name is, and his bath-night.

"We have three classes. Those who bath on Fridays; those who bath on Saturdays; and those who bath 'any-time.' The anytimers are the dirtiest, and they are worried every Sunday till mother has fixed the night, and the weekly tub is secured.

"A health lesson is sometimes given. This is generally when we are talking about the Resurrection of the Flesh. The Body is to be raised by God. It must be a clean body and a strong body. Do you go to bed early? Do you play football? Do you skip every day? Will you ask mother to give you brown bread instead of white? Will you spend your pence on a glass of good milk instead of sweeties? Will you ask for cocoa instead of tea which has been stewing on the hob? A novel kind of catechism, this, but it's not bad, you know."

On another occasion, the Bishop, having heard of Father Ball's children, paid a surprise visit on the Sunday before the Confirmation. Following the priest's example, his Lordship asked the children what they thought God



would expect of them when they were confirmed. He was much impressed by their replies.

"Please, sir, to be unselfish."

"To share with others."

"To be pure."

"To tell no lies."

"To be kind to little brothers."

"To do your work well."

"To be brave."

"To love good things."

"Not to mind being laughed at."

Another feature of John Ball's ministry was his charity towards other Christians. If the people under his guidance knew nothing of ritual controversy they also knew nothing of the bitterness which is supposed by some to be a necessary ingredient of Churchmanship in its relation to Nonconformity. Of course John Ball did not compromise. He believed so sincerely in the value of having a united society to meet the individualism and selfishness of the world that he could never belittle the doctrine of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church of which he believed the Anglican Church was a true part. Nevertheless, he also believed so intensely in charity and brotherhood as being the essential matter to produce which the Church existed that he would never hold aloof from those who named the Name of Christ and loved the Lord in sincerity. He recognised that but for the Nonconformists vast masses of English people would be living in practical heathendom: he joined with them openly in all kinds of social reform work, vigilance work, temperance work, and such-like. He organised a Bible-reading Union at which ministers of all denominations met and studied Scripture together and exchanged views. He would never allow any unkind things to be said about Dissenters, and the only time he ever boxed an acolyte's ear was when one of them talked

of a "schism shop." The young gentleman was not allowed to take his part in the Lord's Supper for a month after that.

At Christmas there was a monster Children's Treat, at which the schools of St. Martin's, the Salvation Army, the Wesleyan Mission, and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection combined to do justice to tea, crackers, and cake in the Town Hall. This year Vincent Heathcote arranged with the *Vox* people to send a contingent of children from the Socialist Sunday-school in Millwall, and called forth a torrent of applause by telling the audience stories of St. Francis, especially the following from the *Mirror of Perfection* :—

"We have heard Francis say, 'If I were to speak to the Emperor, I would, supplicating and persuading him, tell him for the Love of God and me to make a special law that no man should take or kill Sister Larks, nor do them any harm. Likewise that all the mayors of the towns (like Limehouse) and the lords of castles and villages (like Lord Barton, here) should be bound every year on Christmas Day to compel men to throw wheat and other grains outside the cities and castles (or in the Commercial and East India Dock roads) that our Sister Larks (and Sister Spadgers too) may have something to eat, and also the other birds, on a day of such solemnity. And that for the reverence of the Son of God, who rested on that night with the most blessed Virgin Mary between an Ox and an Ass in the manger, whoever shall have an Ox or an Ass (or a horse in the tram stables or rabbits and fowls in the backyard or a guinea pig or a canary in the kitchen) shall be bound to provide for them on that night the best of good fodder. Likewise on that day, all poor men (the dockers at the gates and the men in the doss-houses and the unions) should be satisfied by the rich with good food. On Christmas Day every Christian should rejoice in the

Lord : and for His love who gave Himself for us all should provide largely not only for the poor but also for the animals and birds."

The most characteristic festival at St. Martin's during Christmastide was what the people called the "Table-ox" or tableaux. These were living pictures of the story of the Nativity performed by the communicants. No one was allowed to take part in them whose character was not beyond reproach. The pictures were arranged by Lord Barton, and rehearsals went on for many weeks beforehand. Each scene of the great drama of the Incarnation, beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, was presented. The little children did the parts of the angels, and the greatest honour was reserved for the boys who were allowed to represent the Holy Child in the various pictures. During each scene the passage of Scripture relating to it was read by Father Ball, and carols were sung in the intervals.

Vincent had never seen anything like it before. It brought vividly before him the great fact, to belief in which he had committed himself by becoming a Christian. "This is either a magnificent lie or it is eternal truth," he said to himself. "If it is a lie, my father is perfectly right in wishing to sweep it off the face of the earth. But if it is, as I believe it is, the truth, then we must live and die for it. Christianity is weak because Christians have not made up their minds on this all-important question. They think of their religion as if it were a kind of luxury to take up or to lay down as they choose or feel inclined. Again, the East End with its simple faith teaches the West End with its shallow, dilettante religiousness. These people here, like St. Peter and the Apostles, are sure that the little Child in the manger is Divine. They believe that in that stable cave at Bethlehem heaven and earth were joined. They believe that a great transaction then took

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place between God and man, and that it is going on still. This is but the outward representation of what happened once, and is happening to-day. At the Lord's Supper they believe they are once more in contact with the Bethlehem scene, and like the shepherds they bow down and worship.

"But it does not, it cannot stop there. It means the transformation of human life. God has come down and has not gone away. God has visited His people. The tabernacle of God is among men. And where are men? Are they only in church? No, they are out and about on the earth, working, trading, designing, talking, writing, playing, eating their bread and drinking their wine. God is with them, this human, loving, pitying, justice-loving, purifying Christ. 'Oh come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem.' Yes, Lord, we will come. This dear earth of Thine shall become Heaven. The poor mean things shall be transformed by Thee as the humble stable shone with Thy glorious presence.

"Listen! What could be more inspiring than this? Where is the *Daily Postbox* or even *Vox* by the side of this?" Tenderly the children sang:—

"Hail, gentle Jesus  
On Mary's breast;  
Hail to you, holy Angels,  
Lulling your Lord to rest.

Hail, Mother Mary,  
Maid undefiled:  
With a sweet murmur soothing  
Jesus, thy Holy Child.

Hail, Son of Mary,  
Verily, Thou art Man,  
Yet with the Father Thou wert  
Long ere the Heavens began.

## BEHOLD THE DAYS COME

Hail, King of Angels,  
Verily Thou art God,  
Hiding Thy wondrous glory  
In our poor flesh and blood.

Hail, simple shepherds,  
Lying upon the cold earth,  
Warmed by the breath of Angels  
Singing of Jesus' birth.

Hail, little manger,  
Throne of the King of kings,  
Song of Thine endless glory  
Through the wide Heaven rings.

Hail, altar of Jesus,  
Young men and old draw near,  
See in the mystic Presence  
Bethlehem everywhere.

Hail, Body of Jesus,  
That very 'Holy Thing'  
Brought by the blessed Spirit  
To Mary wondering.

Hail, Blood of Jesus  
On the rough Cross outpoured,  
Now at the Holy Altar  
Ever to be adored.

Hail, royal Jesus,  
Once on a throne of straw,  
Now on the glittering sapphire  
Reigning for evermore.

Jesus! Jesus! Hail, gentle Jesus.'

## CHAPTER X

### SPIKENARD

Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together.—ISAIAH

ALABASTER COURT was an old Elizabethan house, and had been the home of the Spicebox family since it was built. Sir Joscelyn looked after the interior of the house, and her ladyship managed the garden. He had a magnificent collection of armour and tapestries, the envy of all the connoisseurs in the country, and the pictures would, many of them, have been transferred to the principal galleries of Europe in double-quick time could the owner have been persuaded to sell them.

Lady Spicebox was fond of her husband, some twenty years her senior, but their tastes were different which tended to keep them apart. She would often say that there was not a single subject upon which they really agreed. He was devoted to hunting: she never rode, and got horribly bored with the "shop" talked by the men and women who gathered at Alabaster during the season. He knew the name and history of every art curio in the old house, and the exact peculiarity of every "Madonna" or "Holy Family" in Europe from the Louvre to Buda Pesth: she thought them all the same, and only referred to the house art treasures when asking Sir Joscelyn to lend them out for some up-to-date exhibition at which she wanted to create a sensation. He was an old-fashioned Protestant who had a horror of the vicar's tendency to what he called

"forms and ceremonies": she was inclined to the religion of St. Martin's Mission, Limehouse, which scarcely coincided with Sir Joscelyn's proclivities.

Lastly, he was a Liberal. The family had always been Whig, and though the doings of the modern Liberal Party sometimes caused him heart searchings, and made him wonder if he would die without having found Unionist salvation, he stuck to it and subscribed largely to the funds. Cruel people hinted that Sir Joscelyn would like to be the Earl of Alabaster, and that it was only the Liberals who would be likely to gratify his desire.

Lady Spicebox, on the other hand, was as we know "a sort of a Socialist." In this she was as genuine as her ignorance and indolence would allow her to be. Had she known more by study of the real problem, had she read the countless volumes on Socialism, Karl Marx, Belfort Bax, William Morris, Engels, Liebknecht, and the rest, which covered her drawing-room table, had she even read the *Vox* diligently, she would have been more truly a Socialist. As it was she dabbled in the thing. She picked up her ideas from talking with Lord Barton, of whom she was immensely fond, and for whose self-sacrifice she had an admiration amounting to idolatry. She had a passion for shocking other people, especially those of her own class. There was almost nothing she would not risk saying if by doing so she could create an effect, make a score, or shock a prude.

"Pure cussedness," Barton called it, and having, as he had, a regard for her soul's welfare, he was seriously alarmed at the growth of this vice in Lady Spicebox. He confessed he could not manage her. When asked why he did not keep his friend in order, he replied—

"Do I look the sort of person to hold on to the tail of a comet?"

He had serious misgivings about the Christmas party

which he had assisted her to bring about, but he hoped for the best as he stood in the hall with Vincent Heathcote on New Year's Eve.

Vincent too felt very strange. The only big house he had ever been in before was Fenwick, and this seemed quite different. It was so stiff. The butler seemed to treat him as if he were a new prisoner just lodged in gaol. He expected to be told to have a bath and put on convict's clothes. A nice-looking warder, that is to say footman, was told off to show him his room where he could wash his hands before tea. But William (that was his name) seemed quite surprised and even frightened when Vincent put his arm into his, and said, "Come along and show me the room," just as he would have done to one of the sidesmen at St. Martin's. The other footmen laughed, though not so much as they would have done had they not become used to her ladyship's eccentric friends. And after all the sons of a duke had been known to kiss the housemaid at Alabaster. Why shouldn't this Heathcote fellow go arm in arm with William? But William was more astonished still when they arrived at the bedroom, and Vincent began to talk quite naturally to him about his home and his family, and to ask him if he had made his Christmas Communion.

"It's awfully nice of you, sir, to talk like this," he said, "but I think I ought to tell you, sir, it won't do in the drawing-room or the dining-room when the other gentry are about. They wouldn't like it."

Vincent laughed, but had sufficient perception to see that William was right, and he thanked him, remarking, however, that he should do what he liked when they were alone, or when Lord Barton was present. "Lord Barton understands me," he said. "Of course, you know I'm not one of the gentry, and I may make mistakes. Look here, William, if there's anything else you see that's wrong,



please come and tell me. Just wink with your left eye, and I shall know I am making a fool of myself. Now show me the way down to tea."

"All right, sir. But, sir, I suppose you've taken tea with the gentry before now. If not, would you like to have a few hints?"

Vincent laughed again. "I think I shall be all right. Let me see. I must not use the sugar tongs, or is it only at Oxford where it matters? And I must not eat too much muffin, though I'm awfully fond of it, partly because of the grease and partly because we are going to have another dinner at eight o'clock."

"Yes, sir," said William, "and I would not call the ladies 'sister' like you called me 'brother' just now. It is only hospital nurses and religious women as is called sisters. And you must not say 'Earl of Swampshire' or 'Countess of Swampshire' when you talk to them. You must say 'Lord Swampshire' or 'Lady Swampshire'."

"Mayn't I say 'My lord' or 'My lady'?"

"No," said William, "that's worse."

"Is there anything else, William?"

"Well, sir, I've noticed things Mr. Bunks does which he oughtn't. You mustn't ask for another helping at dinner, though you may, if you like, at lunch. You mustn't put your napkin under your chin. You mustn't talk across the table. You mustn't take the fruit off the dishes till dessert comes on, and you mustn't eat cheese with your knife."

"Thanks awfully, William, you're a brick."

"Ah! my dear Mr. Heathcote," said Lady Spicebox, when at last he arrived in the tea-room. "I am delighted to see you. Barty told me you'd come. Let me introduce you to some of our guests. They haven't all arrived yet. Here's Lord Swampshire and Lady Swampshire. Here's Canon Pixley. Mr. Kesterton, of course, you know. The

Bishop of Swampton will be here directly. Let me introduce Mr. Heathcote to you, Miss Market Hatcham. Where's your dear mother? Doesn't she want tea, or is she still with Mr. Vandertrust amongst my chrysanthemums and camellias? Oh, here's Lord Haypence. 'Now we're all mustered,' as Mr. Gladstone said at the pepper-maker's party."

Poor Vincent began badly. He was wedged in between Lord Swampshire and Miss Market Hatcham. He was yards away from Kesterton and Barton. He was obliged to stay where he was with two pieces of muffin in one hand which would stick together, and a delicate little Dresden cup full of hot tea in the other, which he dared not blow, and which gave signs, at any moment, of toppling over if his hand shook. Lord Swampshire was describing a run with the Pytchley, and how somebody had lost his hat in a bullfinch, though how he accomplished the trick Vincent could not, for the life of him, understand. Miss Market Hatcham was laughing immoderately at nothing, and all around him there was a buzz of conversation which made him quite giddy.

It was even worse when Lord Swampshire suddenly stopped talking about the Pytchley and turned away to Lord Haypence to talk about the prospects of to-morrow's weather. Miss Market Hatcham had now ceased laughing, and seemed to expect Vincent to say something.

What could he say? What subject in the whole of the universe was there about which he could talk to this pretty but insipid-looking girl? She probably knew nothing of theology or of Socialism, the two things which loomed largest in Vincent's mental horizon at that time. She did not even look as if she cared about the Raphael Madonna which was staring down upon her from the wall opposite. Apparently she was interested in bullfinches, but Vincent wasn't. So what could he say? And

still the tea was hot, and the handful of muffin almost uneaten.

At last she came to the rescue and said, "You came from London to-day, didn't you, Mr. Heathcote? I suppose there are not many people in town now?"

"Oh, I think there must be a few millions left still," said Vincent.

Then she began to laugh again in her silly way, and if it had not been for the arrival of the Bishop of Swampton, at which all present rose to their feet, Vincent would have been in despair.

As it was he took the opportunity to walk across the room to Kesterton and talk politics.

"We are a curious mixture in this house, aren't we?" said Kesterton. "I think I had better put you up to a thing or two concerning the party, unless Barton has told you everything."

"He got my dress clothes for me, if you mean that."

"No," said Kesterton, laughing; "I mean concerning the guests. Now there's Sir Joscelyn himself, our host. You know, of course, he's an official Liberal, and Sir James Hornby, the Cabinet Minister, will be here before dinner unless he has to go to Windsor. Then there's Lord Hay-pence. He's the *Daily Postbox* man. Mr. Vandertrust is the American millionaire. That lady whom you were talking to is Miss Market Hatcham, who is supposed to be in love with him; at least her mother—that lady with the good complexion by the Venus in the window—hopes she is. Lord Swampshire is ground landlord of two-thirds of Swampton, where your father used to live, and where the *Vox* began to scream when it was a baby. That chap with the long hair is Poppy Oliphant, an awfully good actor, and not half such an ass as he looks. And now for the clerics. The Bishop is a harmless old cove who calls himself a Christian Socialist. Don't offend him

if you can help it. He may be useful in the future. Canon Trefusis, that priest with a brown moustache, is a Low Churchman, who may be rather a nuisance before we have done with him."

"Why?" said Vincent.

"If we talk things over as I hope we shall, he'll draw a red herring over the course and talk rot about ritualism. Canon Pixley, too, is dangerous. He's a very clever individualist and knows all the scientific objections to Socialism. But I think we can minimise his influence by setting him to fight the rest of the clergy over the Creed which he does not quite believe. Smilepeace, the Vicar of St. Silas', will never leave off if he once gets on to Pixley."

"I thought Bunks was coming," said Vincent.

"Yes, he will be here by the next train. I hope he won't fail us, for there are none too many on our side. Let's see. For Socialism we have you and Barton, Bunks, Lady Spicebox, and myself. All the rest are Liberals, Individualists, Capitalists, Tories, and Clerics."

"Can't we count the Bishop on our side?" said Vincent.

"Yes, he will be all right if he does not funk it, and if he does not happen to want a subscription from Vandertrust and Haypence."

"I am afraid Lady Spicebox won't do us much good," sighed Vincent.

"Vinney," said Kesterton, "you are a blind donkey. Lady Spicebox is mistress of the house. She is also a born generalissima. You will see that she will so marshal her forces, and the forces of the enemy too, that we shall have a big battle before the week's out. Leave it to her: she'll manage it."

"And what am I to do?" said Vincent.

"Eat plenty at every meal; play on the piano and sing

your best songs ; talk to Sir Joscelyn about his pictures and curios ; be very respectful to the Bishop, and kind to the Low Church Canon."

"And say nothing about Socialism ?"

"Only at the right moment," said Kesterton.

## CHAPTER XI

### BUNKS

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap ;  
Find wealth,—but let no impostor heap ;  
Weave robes,—let not the idle wear ;  
Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

P. B. SHELLEY

BILL BUNKS, as he was called by his comrades, was a plain, honest English working man with a warm heart and a keen sense of humour. Born "in the fustian" (or whatever the proper antithesis be to "the purple" of the other class) he had lived with the poor all his life. Like Moses, he had looked out on to his brethren and had seen their burdens and had resolved to lighten them. If Lord Barton had received a call to make himself poor for the kingdom of heaven's sake, Bill had had a vocation to give up ease and comfort for a like object. He had attained to what is called a good position among his fellows. He was in regular work and was looked up to with respect by his employers. Any specially difficult work that had to be done, requiring care and tact, they would always entrust to him. At home he was supremely happy. He had a good wife, and a nice little family of smiling, chubby boys and girls, a house in Upton Park, which was a tiny bit less jerry-built than the rest, a garden which produced climbing roses as well as Brussels sprouts. He belonged to a Building Society, which arranged for its members that in a short space of time each should possess the freehold of his cottage. There was every temptation

to Bunks to lead the ordinary selfish life of a successful artisan. It was therefore a real sacrifice that he had made when he had devoted himself body and mind to the Socialist cause. It laid him open to the suspicions of his otherwise well-disposed employers. It took up hours of his time which he might have spent in well-earned leisure.

Unlike many of his fellow trade unionists he took a wide outlook on the social problem, having a special compassion for the unskilled labourer and the sweated women workers.

He would often say: "Here are we men agitating for an eight hours day and a living wage for ourselves, while our wives and daughters are labouring fourteen and sixteen hours a day with an average wage of twelve shillings and sixpence a week, and their time taken away from domestic duties."

His interest in the casual labourer dated from the great dock strike of 1889, and it had never flagged. It was then, too, that his name had come to the front as that of a "Labour leader." "Leader" was indeed the right title for him, for he would never let himself be led by the men. He had a great contempt for the men who talked loud of Socialism as if it were a magic process that would set everything right and save them the trouble of attention to their own characters. He disliked to hear them babble of "social reform" and the "housing problem" when he knew that some of them were drinking themselves drunk for want of a little self-restraint and letting their own houses reek in filth which a few pence spent in soap and water could have set right.

In the thick of a strike he would boldly tell the men that it was no good to get a penny an hour more if the penny found its way to the public-house. "Don't put your money on a horse," he would say. "To begin with, you don't know a horse from a cow. Put it on the feet and

limbs of your kids in the shape of good shoes and stockings."

This sort of telling utterance made Bill the darling of his comrades. For the working man, like his fellows in Dukery Square, likes to be told of his faults.

Gradually Bill Bunks (he was never called William, though he had been christened so) assumed the position of an uncrowned King of East London, and his fame spread all over the country. Having won every election for which he had ever been a candidate, whether for a Board of Guardians, a Borough Council, or a County Council, he was at length asked to stand for Parliament.

A gigantic majority for "Bunks and Labour" opened the eyes of the club loungers in Pall Mall who had hitherto not believed that there was any strength in the Socialist movement in England.

So much for the State biography of Bunks. And now for his religion. A great politician once said that the lower classes care as little for the dogmas of religion as the upper classes do for the practice of it. Bunks certainly thought he cared little for dogma, though chiefly because he had no conception of what it meant. Having been nourished when a boy on the thin pabulum in things spiritual of an ordinary English school, where he had been left to suppose that religion consisted in knowing the lists of the kings of Israel and Judah, and in singing a washy ditty every morning about pearly gates which at some undefined period after his funeral would take the place of the palings of Ann's Alley where he then played marbles, Bill Bunks, like our friend John Baptist Heathcote before him, had not expected Christianity to help him at all when he began to take up with Social Reform.

True, this ignoring of religion had not taken the form of active unbelief as in the case of Heathcote. Partly this was because Bunks had not a critical mind and did



not trouble himself with questions of Darwin and the origin of the Gospels. Partly also it was because he had a secret liking for "the old Book," as he called the Bible. From it he culled many of his best sayings on Socialism for his speeches.

Personally, too, he felt very strongly that he was subject to severe temptations, and he knew that the men with whom he had to do were subject to them too. He was too honest to ignore this or to lay it to the door of mere environment. He knew that religion dealt with this kind of thing, and, as far as he could see, nothing else attempted to do so. Then when he met John Ball and other Christians in the thick of East-End politics and saw that their religion was a very real matter to them, even though he could not feel it strongly himself, he gave it his approval and did not mind saying so in public. He refused to belong to the National Secularist Socialist League, although he worked with it in political matters.

But "dogma" was to him associated with a persecuting spirit which was alien to his nature. He did not realise that as a Socialist he was enunciating wild dogmas day by day by the side of which the Apostles' Creed was almost tame. He simply did not know enough to be very Christian nor to be very unchristian either. Hence, on the one hand, John Baptist Heathcote could claim that he was not an opponent of Secularism, while Lady Spicebox, on the other, could call him her "dear old Bunks," and say he was "one of us and all that."

Such was the man who that week at Alabaster Court found himself face to face with a severe critic in the person of Canon Pixley.

Percy Pixley was a brilliant scholar from Oxford who had attracted sufficient attention in political circles to obtain a canonry from the Tory party. Amongst ecclesiastics he was called the "Stormy Petrel of the Church,"

for he had a habit of warning them in sharp, incisive language, by articles and sermons which he poured out month by month through the Press, of the dangerous times that were coming on Church and State if such and such a policy were pursued to its logical conclusion. At one time it was the Church which would certainly be disestablished if the Creeds were not readjusted according to the advance of knowledge, at another time it was the British Constitution which would crumble to dust if the clergy interfered in politics. Canon Pixley had lately been attacking the Socialists, and especially the Christian Socialists, in the reviews. Lady Spicebox knew this, and was resolved to set him and Bill Bunks at each other like two fighting-cocks. Bunks, in his simplicity, and probably too because he had few half-crowns to spare, had never read the Canon's articles. In fact, he had never heard his name until he met him at Alabaster Court.

It was over a cigarette and a cup of coffee in the smoking-room that the Labour Leader and the Stormy Petrel came to conflict.

"I object, to begin with," said the Canon, "to the way in which you M.P.'s call yourselves the representatives of 'Labour.' What do you mean by Labour?"

"We mean manual labour chiefly," said Bunks.

"But manual labour includes many things of a very different character. If I write a sermon I do a great deal of manual labour. But you don't claim to represent me?"

"If you can show that you are a worker, I think we do claim to represent you. But, Canon, your interests are so well looked after by others. You have the bishops in the House of Lords."

"You mean," said the Canon, "that if I or my fellow-clergy suffer from injustice it will be remedied by Parliament more quickly than an injustice suffered by the working classes."

"Exactly."

"But then," said Canon Pixley, "that shows me that you represent the classes who are treated unjustly rather than the manual labourers as such. Why not call yourselves the 'Justice Party,' rather than the 'Labour Party'? It is the *class* party name that I dislike."

"But," said Bunks, "people would object just as much if we called ourselves the Justice Party. They would say, 'What right have you to claim to know more of what is just than others do?' No, Canon, we had better stick to 'Labour.' Most people know what it means, even though you may profess ignorance."

"Well," said the Canon, "I'll grant you that, though I am not convinced. Now, I have another complaint to make. Mark you, I have no great objection to your party having a place in English politics. I think there are special matters upon which you may claim fairly to have a right to speak. For example, you ought to know more about questions of compensation, what constitutes a fair wage and a fair working day, what rules should be made to ensure sanitary workshops, and so on, than my Lord Tom Noddy from Eton. But, on the other hand, you seem to me to ignore the vast class of persons, scientific men and so forth, who are quite as much concerned with labour as you are. Where would your agricultural labourer be to-day without the man of science and the chemist? Where would your shipwright or your engineer be without the inventor?"

"We do not ignore them," said Bunks.

"Pardon me," said the Canon, "I think you do in this matter of Parliamentary representation. It is notorious that you Labour men say that a man who represents labour must himself be a working man who has felt the pinch of poverty."

"Well, I think it's best," said Bill. "Look at me. I

have been through the mill myself. That's why I can speak on behalf of the casual worker."

"Yes," said the Canon, "I will allow—I have already allowed—that in many matters you can speak with special force because you are yourself a working man. But does not the very example you give show that you really agree with me? You were once a casual worker. You are now a foreman artisan. You are, moreover, I take it, a man who has read a little and who has educated himself. You are therefore above the mass of men you represent. You can deal with the unemployed question, for example, better because you are not yourself one of the unemployed. Why cannot you go a step further and allow that the man of superior education, who, as I have shown, is so intimately connected with labour by his scientific knowledge or his other attainments, may fairly represent you in Parliament as well as the manual worker?"

"There is something in what you say, Canon."

Pixley smiled and lit his seventeenth cigarette.

"For all that," said Bunks, "the manual labourer has most to do with the production of wealth, and he ought to count for more than he does."

"He may do the bulk of the actual work in handling material, shaping it, and so on, but the value of the work of the inventor and the director of labour is really the greater. Don't tell me, for example, that a man like Edison is not doing more for labour at the present day than any ten or a hundred working men."

"No doubt," said Bunks; "but I do not see what that has got to do with Parliamentary representation."

"Simply this," replied Pixley. "Your manual Labour M.P. only represents Labour as if it were merely a question of actual physical toil in running a machine or digging the earth. I maintain that 'Labour' is a much larger matter and includes the whole world of industry, in the

running of which many others besides manual labourers have a hand, and they too should be considered suitable representatives. You should be willing to be represented by scientific men for example. Instead of which you class all who are not manual labourers as 'capitalists' and 'blood-suckers!' and won't learn anything from them, much less let them represent you. How foolish is this. For it is these men who are really lessening the toil of labour more and more by their discoveries."

"Excuse me, Canon," said Bunks. "You see we have listened to that kind of argument so long and we haven't found it do us much good. We have entrusted our interests to the 'educated classes' so called and they have shown themselves, while very capable of looking after their own, quite incapable of looking after ours. Now we are taking the matter into our own hands. The uppers have taught us a lesson. Look at all the laws they made for their own interests when they had their own way. They built up the land system, the law of settled estates and the like. Why, the landlords and the lawyers between them have literally provided for themselves and their families by gulling the British people under the pretence of legislation for the country's good. Now we are going to have a try."

"To gull the British public?" said Pixley. "Two wrongs don't make a right, Mr. Bunks. If class legislation by the landlords and such-like has complicated the social problem and produced injustice, do not let us make matters worse by fresh class laws!"

"There is a great difference," said Bunks, "between the class laws we propose and the laws I have just referred to. The laws passed by the rich legislators in the past were for the benefit of a few—they created monopolies. The laws we propose are for the benefit of the vast majority of the nation. If we bring about a monopoly it will be the monopoly of the State itself."

"In other words, Socialism," said the Canon.

"Precisely so," said Bunks.

"There, of course, I join issue with you again. Are you really prepared to advocate the whole programme of Socialism? If you are, do you think you are truly representing the mind of 'Labour' as you call it? Are we at all prepared for this enormous revolution in our whole industry and politics? Do you think the working classes whom you claim to represent believe in Socialism?"

"We are educating them up to it," said Bunks.

"Well, as you probably know," said Pixley, "I am totally opposed to Socialism, but I am not going to give my reasons at present. I wish to keep to our one point, namely that the Labour Party does not represent labour, even in the narrow sense in which you use the word."

"What do you mean?" said Bunks. "We have won seats all along the line. At all our congresses and conferences we pass Socialist resolutions by enormous majorities."

"For all that," said the Canon, "the bulk of the working class is not Socialist, nor does it mean to be. Your average working man is far too contented and happy in his present position to want to run after this will-o'-the-wisp of Socialism. It is true you can get him to vote for Socialism, but this is partly because he does not understand what it is, and partly because there happens to be some temporary injustice in connection with trades disputes or employers' liability which he rightly thinks a Labour Party in Parliament will settle to his advantage. But once get these minor matters settled, and once get him to understand what Socialism involves if carried out completely, and he will have no more of it."

"You think, then, there will be a reaction some day?" asked Bunks.

"I am sure of it," said Canon Pixley, "unless——"

"Unless," said Kesterton, who had been listening with great interest to this friendly passage of arms—"unless by introducing Christian Socialism we can persuade the selfish worker of whom the Canon speaks to think more of the needs of the whole nation than the particular wants of his own section or trade."

"I do not quite follow you," said Pixley.

"I mean," replied Kesterton, "that while I agree with you that the bulk of the working classes are not yet Socialist, and for the reasons you give may be inclined to butt against it, I look forward to a time when, through a greater spread of unselfishness among all classes, there will be a desire to legislate for the good of all, especially for the down-trodden ones who cannot help themselves. This spirit when reduced to practical proposals will take the shape of Socialism."

"I don't believe it," said the Canon; "Socialism is a thoroughly selfish scheme."

"And what is Capitalism?" said Lady Spicebox, chiming in, "or Competition?"

"They are the quintessence of selfishness," said Bunks, rather proud of this fine word.

"A sort of tinned-meat concentration of all the refuse scrapings of centuries of self-interest," said Lord Barton.

"Take care, Barty," said Lady Spicebox. "Mr. Vander-trust will hear you, and he might think you were talking of his sausages and all that!"

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BATTLE

A friendship that in frequent fits  
Of controversial rage emits  
The sparks of disputation,  
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,  
Most unavoidably creates  
The thought of conflagration.—COWPER

**K**ESTERTON did not at all exaggerate Lady Spicebox's strategic powers. Nobody but she knew why it was that almost every conversation during the first few days of the New Year ended in a discussion on Socialism. If the Bishop was talking to Lord Swampshire about his property in Swampton, and how a new church was wanted there, Lady Spicebox would hover about them and put in a word about ground rents, upon which Lord Swampshire would say something about these confounded Socialists who wanted to tax him out. The Bishop would then make a mild remark about the difficulty of justifying the enormous increase of the value of land just because it happened to have a house on it.

Having started this, the lady like a little gnat would swoop off to where Mrs. Market Hatcham and Mr. Vandertrust were amiably discussing the "absurd exaggerations" of the *Jungle*.

"Don't you think," said Lady Spicebox, "these gigantic Trusts are by their enormous concentration of capital paving the way for Socialism? It is only a small step from the big Combine to National Trading, and then you



are three-quarters of the way to State Socialism." She had learnt this up by heart from an article by Spikes. Off she went again to join Canon Pixley and Kesterton, who were already deep in a discussion of the Communism of the Acts of the Apostles.

Finding herself unnecessary in that quarter, she would then drag Vincent into the library, where she knew Canon Trefusis was looking at some old pictures of ecclesiastical vestments, and say, "Mr. Heathcote is of opinion that the Church was a Socialist institution when all the clergy wore those things, Canon. Don't you think you had better convince him of the error of his opinion before he gets ordained?"

Lady Spicebox was, however, too clever to sicken her guests with Socialism before she had got them together for the battle of Armageddon, so she would carefully turn their thoughts ever and anon to totally different subjects. In this she employed Poppy Oliphant as her ally. He was getting up a monster Dumb Crambo for Twelfth Night, and he could always be relied upon to require any two or more of the guests for a rehearsal whenever Lady Spicebox gave him a hint.

Late one night, when most of the men were in the smoking-room and the ladies had retired to contemplate and if necessary repair the inroad upon their complexions made by the day's exertions, the Socialist section met to discuss the best way to open the campaign.

"I am of opinion," said Lady Spicebox, "that Sunday is the day for a battle. The better the day, the better the deed."

"But will the Bishop and Canon Trefusis approve of that?" said Barton.

"They won't know that they are approving or disapproving of anything," said her ladyship. "You don't suppose, do you, Barty, that I am going to say to my

guests, 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to have a battle royal. Get to your places'? You don't know me, Barty. No, it will come about without any one except ourselves suspecting it. It will begin by a sermon. I have arranged with Vickery, our parson, to provide us with Prayer Books and hymn books, and he has promised to draw up a short service. It will be in the billiard-room at eleven o'clock."

"I suppose we shall be allowed to go to early service," said Vincent.

"Of course we shall," said Lady Spicebox, "though I doubt if Mr. Vandertrust and Lord Haypence will be there, as they are not what you call practising Christians. Mrs. Market Hatcham, too, will hardly be ready by eight o'clock. She is not very quick at dressing."

"Colours not fast," said Bunks.

"Bunks, you are a disgrace. Be quiet!" said Lady Spicebox.

"Now there is another question, 'Who's to preach'? At first I thought the Bishop would do, but on consideration I think he'd be too long, and it's giving the old fellow a lot of trouble to write it out. He can't preach extempore. Smilepeace is too deadly for words, and Trefusis would only talk about candles, being an Evangelical. In fact, we cannot get a real Gospel sermon nohow, as Father John isn't here, so I decide for Canon Pixley, who will be sure to say something worth hearing and likely to lead to argument."

It will be noticed that though Lady Spicebox professed to discuss these matters with her friends, she had settled the whole business before asking. There was nothing to be done but to acquiesce and to go to bed.

Sunday came at last, and with it the billiard-room service. Lady Spicebox had thought of having the sermon on the stage, which was all ready for Dumb Crambo, but

she remembered Mr. Mallock's *New Republic*, and preferred to do something original "and all that."

Proceedings began with a hymn, "O God our help in ages past." Then the Bishop read the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and some prayers, among them the prayer for Parliament. Canon Trefusis said "Amen" in a loud voice after the words "established among us for all generations," apparently thinking it referred to the position of the National Church. Sir James Hornby coughed, and the Bishop's forehead shone more brightly than ever.

The second hymn was Mr. Russell Lowell's "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide." Sir James Hornby again coughed during the lines, "Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong." It seemed to refer to the Cabinet.

Then Canon Pixley ascended the platform and delivered a carefully-reasoned, thoughtful address on the text, "Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

It was intended as a reply to Kesterton, who had argued that Christianity is essentially a social religion, gathering men into a society, acting upon them in a body. "Thus," Kesterton had said, "it falls in naturally with Socialism in the political sphere which also treats men collectively."

According to Canon Pixley, Christianity was essentially a religion for the individual. Christ called each man to follow Him, to deny himself and to take up a personal cross. Every disciple of Christ would find his true life by self-denial and by crucifying his own evil desires.

"I know," said the Canon, "there are those who say that Christianity is social. Look, they say, at the Church, a social institution, the main outcome of Christianity. In the first place, what is the Church? Surely it is too late in history for us to say that it means the so-called Catholic

Church, depending on some magic theory of 'orders' conveyed by the laying on of hands. But supposing it means, as I for one think it means, the aggregate of Christ's disciples, does that go against my theory of an individual Gospel? On the contrary, it strengthens it. A Christian is an individual cross-bearer. The Church is the sum of all such Christians, to whatever sect they belong.

"I am aware also that there is a tendency to push this erroneous idea of a Church to an extreme which would make it include State Socialism as a part of Christianity. Socialism, it is said, is Christian because corporate in its ideal. Individualism leads to competition, and competition carried to its logical issue, as we see it in our present-day industrial and political system, is unchristian.

"I cannot agree to this, either. Socialism is flatly opposed to Christianity. It knows nothing of self-denial, nothing of cross-bearing. My friends, it is not in the religion of Jesus that we shall find support for State Socialism, nor in State Socialism shall we find the way to become better disciples of the Master."

"Beautiful!" said Lady Spicebox to Barton at luncheon. "Pixley said exactly what I wanted him to say."

"Yes," said Barton, "it was good, distinctly good from his point of view. I expect we shall have a good discussion. Already I can see that Vincent is hard at work with Sir James Hornby. I hope he is not getting too cheeky. I am rather glad he has got to go back to Fenwick in a few days."

"Now you mustn't be too long over your cups and cigarettes, gentlemen," said Lady Spicebox to the men, as she drove her squadron of females into the drawing-room. "You must give us poor women the benefit of your superior knowledge."

"Well, Lady Spicebox," said Mrs. Market Hatcham, "I hope you've been converted in your own house by that

excellent address which Canon Pixley gave us in the billiard-room."

"I agreed with the greater part of it," said Lady Spicebox, "but I am just as much a Socialist as ever. By the way, Mrs. Hatcham, did you agree with all he said about self-denial? It seems to me that his religion is a harder one to follow than the High Church which, I believe, you affect."

"Good gracious, I'm not High Church. I don't know what I am. I like a good sermon, and I shall go to Canon Pixley's for the future when I am in town."

"But will you carry out what he says?" said Lady Swampshire. "I agree with our hostess that it will take a bit of doing."

"Oh, I never carry out sermons," said Mrs. Market Hatcham, "it's quite hard work enough listening to them."

"Mamma," said her daughter, "Mr. Heathcote's been saying some things to me which have made me rather uncomfortable about Mr. Vandertrust."

"Good heavens, child, what do you mean? Isn't the business sound?"

"It's not sound from a religious point of view if what Mr. Heathcote tells me is true."

"Who is this Mr. Heathcote?" asked Lady Swampshire of Lady Spicebox. "Do tell us, he's so good-looking and interesting, and yet there's a something about him not quite *comme il faut*. He's not a gentleman, is he?"

"Perhaps he's not what *you* call a gentleman," said the lady of the house. "His father's a journalist and an editor. So is Lord Haypence. Is Lord Haypence a gentleman? If he is, then Vincent Heathcote is too."

"Well, of course, Lord Haypence has got well within our set by now, and we don't ask such questions about him, any more than we do of Mr. Vandertrust. But this boy whose evening clothes don't fit and who as<sup>1</sup>      rickles

at dinner and winks at the footman and talks religion at meals and says grace at breakfast cannot be so easily received into Society."

"I saw Lord Haypence pick his teeth with a fork," said Cissy Hatcham, "so I don't see why Mr. Heathcote shouldn't say grace and yet be one of us."

"I'm very glad, dear," said the Duchess of Derwentwater, "that you asked us over to the service. What an interesting service it was! So much nicer than the rubbish we are doomed to listen to at Greenside. I assure you our parson gets worse every Sunday with his ritualism and nonsense."

"But you must wait and hear the discussion, Duchess," said Lady Spy. "You see, the fun hasn't begun yet. When the men come out we shall talk about the sermon and all that. Canon Pixley had it all his own way in the pulpit, but you wait till Jack Kesterton and Barty have a go at him, let alone Bunks and young Heathcote. Then there'll be a shine."

"Oh, none of your Bartons and Bunkses will convince me," said the Duchess. "I'm a Conservative. I hate Liberals."

"But we're not Liberals, we're Socialists," said Lady Spicebox.

"It's a distinction without a difference," said the Duchess, though if she had been pressed she could not for the life of her have said why. "Your ideas are quite absurd, wanting to make us all equal. As if the Duke could possibly be on an equality with our gardener!"

"What do you mean by equality?" said the hostess, thinking that as the men were absent she might indulge in a little abstract Socialism on her own.

"Equality!" said the Duchess. "Why, of course, equality means equality. Everybody knows that equality means . . . equality!"

"Poppa says," put in Lady Mary Grassmere, coming to the rescue of her mother, "that if we were all equal to-day we should be all unequal to-morrow."

"Quite so," said the Duchess. "If our gardener had all the rents of Grassmere to-day he would drink himself to death at the 'Duke's Arms,' and he'd be unequal before the evening."

"Very unequal on his legs, I expect," said Lady Spicebox, laughing. "But what we want is equality of opportunity. At least, that's what Barty says. You cannot say that the gardener has the same opportunity as the Duke?"

"Why should he?" said Her Grace of Derwentwater. "He has everything he wants. Uneducated people do not require so much as we do."

"But the people are being educated more and more," said Lady Spy.

"Yes, that's just it. Absurd notions have got into their heads, and you and Lord Barton encourage them. Why, they'll be wanting to send their boys to Eton soon."

"Why shouldn't they?" said Lady Spicebox, a little mischievously. Knowing that the little dunce, the Marquess of Lakeside, had just taken Third Form, she could not help adding, "I dare say your gardener's boy would hold his own with some of the Eton kiddies."

"Well, all I can say is this," said the Duchess; "England is becoming quite unbearable with all these new notions and ideas. There's no respect and no reverence anywhere. They don't curtsy to us and they don't touch their hats. They seem to think they're just as good as we are. It wasn't so when I was a girl. Even in churches they're beginning to behave as if we were all equal. Our parson has cut down our pew, which I believe he has no right to do, and he lets the people come up to receive on Sacrament Sunday at the same time as the Duke. And they kneel quite close to one with their dirty clothes."

"Poppa says he shall leave England soon and live at Monte Carlo," said Lady Mary, as if the awful prospect of the exodus of the Grassmere family from the neighbourhood might lead Lady Spicebox to revise her opinions.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Market Hatcham; "here come the bogey men."

"You evidently don't understand Christian Socialism, Canon, and that's the long and short of it," Kesterton was saying as they entered.

"That's exactly what I thought," said Lady Spicebox in a shrill voice, conscious that the hour had come, and determined to crack the match and light the faggots. "Your sermon was quite lovely, Canon Pixley, and all that, but you did not hit the point, if you'll excuse my saying so!"

"Indeed, Lady Spicebox, in what direction was I wrong?"

"I leave that to Lord Barton," said Lady Spicebox, "I feel sure he agrees with me."

"Well, I think, Gladys, you should have made good your own criticism, but since you appeal to me I am bound to say that while I thoroughly endorse what you say as to the delight with which we Christian Socialists listened to the sermon, I do not think the Canon appreciates our position.

"Firstly, we do not say that State Socialism is a part of Christianity. If we did it would be equivalent to denying the title of Christian to all the civilised governments of Europe. State Socialism has not yet been adopted by any of them. I would go further and say that, as a Christian Socialist, I think it would be absurd at present to try to force Socialism upon Russia. I am inclined to think that a monarchy was in old days the most Christian way in which this country could have been governed, people being what they are. The question



before us is not whether Socialism is a part of Christianity, but whether Socialism is not the best available economic system for Christians to seek to establish, seeing that, under our present economic system of cut-throat competition, society has become almost impossible for Christians to live in and at the same time practise their religion."

"Then you agree with Canon Pixley," said the Bishop, "that Christianity is a religion for the individual?"

"Obviously, it is that, my lord; but, man being a social animal, nothing human can be considered purely from an individualist standpoint. Least of all can Christians view things human in this way, for they are pledged out of loyalty to Christ's plan of redemption to bring about a kingdom, a church, a society in fact. 'Socialism,' using it in its literal abstract sense, apart from concrete schemes, is the very air in which Christian individualism lives and breathes. My duty towards God implies my duty towards my neighbour. I cannot be a good man and a mere individualist at one and the same time."

"Would you say," said Canon Pixley, "that a Christian could be a good man and a Tory?"

"Of course I should," said Lord Barton. "If a Christian honestly thinks that Tory principles will best enable society to live a corporate Christian life, then not only is he a good Christian and a Tory, but he would be a bad Christian if he were not a Tory, because he would not be seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness to the best of his knowledge. Personally, I could not be a Christian and a Tory."

"But was not Canon Pixley right," said Mr. Smilepeace, "when he said that Socialism knows nothing of self-denial and therefore is flatly opposed to Christianity?"

"I think his conclusion was wrong," said Kesterton, taking up the thread. "It is true that Socialism knows

little of self-denial, but it knows more of it than the present competitive system which glories in denying itself nothing. Herbert Spencer said that the law of the modern commercial world is, 'Cheat and be cheated.' There is no self-denial in the principle of 'each one for himself,' as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens. But I do not understand Canon Pixley to argue that the competitive system is contrary to Christianity. Yet it is more so than Socialism if self-denial is to be the test. True and intelligible Socialism distinctly demands self-denial, and this brings me to my point. Because it demands self-denial, therefore it must be ultimately Christian. We are Christian Socialists because we understand that our present system can never be superseded by Socialism, which we believe to be the best system, until all men, both rich and poor, have learnt to deny themselves."

"The difference, then, between an ordinary Socialist and a Christian Socialist is this," said Canon Trefusis. "The ordinary Socialist thinks he can bring about the adoption of his scheme without any appeal to moral forces such as self-restraint or unselfishness, while the Christian Socialist is sure that they are necessary and trusts in his religion to produce them."

"That is well put, Canon," said Lord Barton.

"Will some one give us a definition of Socialism?" said Lord Swampshire. "The word seems to mean one thing to one man and another thing to another. I understand that the Bishop of Swampton calls himself a Christian Socialist, but his views are not the same as Lord Barton's and Mr. Kesterton's."

"I don't think we could do better than ask Mr. Heathcote to do this for us," said Lady Spicebox. "He has been a Socialist all his life. Some of us began as Tories or Liberals."

Vincent stepped forward and began thus :—

"I will put it in the words of an Anglican priest whom I know well.

"‘Socialism is a theory of society which is designed to bring about a more just, righteous, and orderly arrangement of our social relationships than the present system. The present system is based on selfishness. Socialism is based on brotherhood. It has three foundation principles: (1) Equality of opportunity. (2) Common ownership of land and capital. (3) Co-operation instead of Competition.’"


"Does the Bishop hold to that?" said Lord Swampshire.

"Perhaps I should hardly go as far as Mr. Heathcote," said the Bishop a little nervously. "I cannot say I have ever formulated a scheme of Socialism in my own mind, but I take a great interest in social questions, and feel that some sort of readjustment of property is necessary."

"In a word, my lord," said Lord Swampshire, with aggravating persistence, "you do not accept State Socialism as the best system for this country? You are not prepared to further what in this house is called the 'Coming Revolution'?"

"Oh no, I think not that," said the Bishop; "at least, I think I don't think that."

"Excuse my persistence," said Lord Swampshire, "but the point is very important. I have had many conversations this week with Mr. Kesterton, Lord Barton, and Mr. Heathcote. These gentlemen, and I suppose Mr. Bunks and our hostess Lady Spicebox, are frankly Socialists—that is to say, they adopt the programme of State Socialism, and look forward to seeing its establishment in this country. The Bishop, and I dare say many others of us here, on the other hand, while sympathising with the poor and desiring to see many great social



reforms carried out, are yet definitely opposed to the programme of State Socialism. We should think such a revolution the greatest misfortune that could befall England. Now I think for the purpose of our discussion, for a discussion it seems to have become, it would be much better for those who hold this moderate view to separate themselves definitely from the others. Personally I am prepared to agree with the Canon that Socialism, by which I mean the well-known scheme so excellently described in a few words just now by Mr. Heathcote, is deliberately opposed to Christianity."

"May I take up that challenge?" said Vincent. "I agree with Lord Swampshire that it is best for those who are not out-and-out Socialists to call themselves by another name. Nevertheless, I do not agree that they are so far removed from us as his lordship imagines. I believe that all who are interested in social reform are, whether they know it or not, hastening on the Revolution. And I am glad of it. But the challenge I want to take up is contained in the latter part of what Lord Swampshire said. He asserts that Socialism as desired by me is opposed to Christianity. I say it is hand and glove with Christianity. I say it will never be realised without Christianity, and, speaking for myself alone, I am sure I could not be a Christian without seeking to further it. As Lady Spicebox has told you, I have been a Socialist all my life; not a very long one, it is true. My father is a Socialist, and a leader among them. My mother was a Socialist. She died from a blow received at a Socialist meeting, given her by an Anarchist. I mention this because Canon Trefusis yesterday seemed to think that Anarchists and Socialists are one and the same. Well, my father is, I am sorry to say, a Secularist, but I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, he is so simply because Christianity has been caricatured in his sight by the so-called upper classes. You may not

know it, but that speech made by Father Ball in Hyde Park not long ago, which some of you heard, was made because my father had dared him to speak the truth in your presence, and tell you what he thought of modern Christianity in West London. Forgive me for talking about myself, but it is necessary to the argument. That speech of Father Ball's and other causes led to my conversion to Christianity."

"The Holy Spirit, young man," interposed Canon Treffus.

"Quite so, sir; the Holy Spirit. I am now studying for Orders. Now, I ask you to notice this. Has my conversion altered my view of Socialism? Not a bit. The three principles I mentioned just now, equality of opportunity, common ownership, and co-operation instead of competition: they are essentially Christian to my mind. They are certainly not flatly opposed to our religion, as Canon Pixley and Lord Swampshire would have us think. More than this, they can never be brought about except by Christianity. Why should men have equality of opportunity? We Christians alone can answer: Because in the eyes of God Who made them they are all equal. What right have we as Christians to force our poor to live in slums, to sweat them in order to make profits for ourselves, to keep back from them free access to life and health and learning and leisure? No right at all. Is it compatible with Christianity that more than half the land of England should be owned by a handful of persons? Is there any brotherhood possible under our present competitive system, and is not brotherhood Christian?"

He stopped suddenly, feeling that for one so young and in the presence of a bishop he had gone too far. But the audience were interested, and began to ask him questions.

"A remarkable youth that," said the Bishop to Lord Haypence.

"A trifle sensational, I think, my lord."

"I did not think the *Daily Postbox* had any objection to that," said the Bishop, but his lordship of Haypence did not seem to like the remark.

"What's your opinion, Mr. Vandertrust?" said Mrs. Market Hatcham.

"Well, I think two sermons in one day's a bit too much. Of course there's an easy answer to all that boy said. It simply can't be done."

"I can't help thinking it will be done, if he has much to do with it," said Cissy. "What enthusiasm he has got! And how handsome he is!"

"Tea! tea!! tea!!!" cried Lady Spicebox. "Come along! Come along!! Socialists to the right! Capitalists to the left!! Come along!!!"

A knot of tea-drinkers clustered round Vincent, especially when they saw that Sir James Hornby was talking to him and Bunks. A fresh argument was started as to the relationship of the Labour and Liberal parties, the difference between "Labour-Liberal" and "Liberal" only. In the whirl of political wrangling the religious atmosphere was dissipated, and Vincent, who soon lost interest in such conversations when he could not appeal to his Christian experience, slipped out unperceived and went to dress for dinner. On the table in his bedroom he found a letter waiting for him which read thus:—

"DEAR MR. HEATHCOTE,

"Read this at your leisure, and do not hurry to reply to it. I am off by the evening train to London, so shall not see you again for the present. As you would expect, all these discussions have been of immense interest to me as a vicar of a West-End parish. If I may venture on a criticism, I would suggest that perhaps you do not quite realise the enormous difficulty of a situation such as

I am placed in. I do not want to excuse myself, but the fact remains that for a priest to remain faithful to his Lord as vicar of St. Silas', Dukery Square, is a task of no mean magnitude. Did you ever read a little book called *Stephen Remarx*? It was called exaggerated and absurd by some, but I can assure you my experience as a London vicar in the midst of smart society has shown me that it was mild compared with the truth. My position is this:

"The bulk of my parishioners are what is called the 'cream of society.' Some are frankly pagan, and do not attempt to come to church except for their weddings. A large number of the rest are in town only for, say, six or eight Sundays in the year. They call themselves Church-people, but their Churchmanship means little more than support of the Establishment as a political institution which is supposed to be so firmly connected with the Crown and the House of Lords that to disturb the stability of it would be an injury to the other two. They profess a great desire to educate the children of the working classes in the Church religion, but take no pains to teach their own children the same or to have them taught. I do what I can with confirmation-classes, but the worldly atmosphere of their homes discounts the influence of the Church.

"I call these London houses 'homes,' but they do not deserve the name. They are little more than hotels, where the various members of the family have bedrooms which they occupy for a few hours in the early morning, and whence they go out to endless parties, plays, and so-called 'social' gatherings. There is little love and little real friendship in the Dukery Square neighbourhood.

"I do not wish you to think that all my congregation are like these. There are some good souls among them, chiefly belonging to the oldest families, who have not yet lost the sterling qualities of their forefathers in the

Victorian period. But things are bad. The Tractarian movement seems to have spent its force in West London. It is different in your delightful East End. Can there be a revival in the west on the lines which you and your friends, Lord Barton and Mr. Kesterton, favour? I cannot say. But something seems to have told me this week that a renewal of life is coming, and I want you to help us in setting the spirit free to work. You are young. You have unique experience of the social and religious problems of our day. Will you bear St. Silas' Church in mind when you are seeking your title, as you will be soon? God bless you, Vincent Heathcote. You have taught me much this week, for which I thank my Master.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CLAUDE SMILEPEACE."

END OF BOOK I



## BOOK II

### CHAPTER I

#### TO THE COUNTRY

Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
There must be stormy weather ;  
But for some true result of Good  
All parties work together. —TENNYSON

FOUR years have passed. Parliament is approaching the end of its career. By the law of the land there must be a dissolution in a few months. The Government has determined to go to the country on the Disestablishment of the Church. A Bill is before the House of Commons. It is doubtful if it will ever reach the Lords. If it does it will be thrown out. No one has done more to hamper the passage of the Bill than Kesterton.

"He's a mystery to me, is Kesterton," said Sir James Hornby, who, like many Liberals, could never understand why "Disestablishment," which may have been a good cry some twenty years before, had long since ceased to interest the bulk of the Progressive Party. Kesterton had a way of proposing awkward amendments which the Liberal capitalists could not accept. It was not so much that he cared to preserve the Establishment as that he wanted to force the Liberals to separate themselves from Capitalism or die. When the clause of the Disestablishment Bill was before the House, in which it was pro-

posed to abolish tithes as payment of the clergy, he promptly added an amendment to include the abolition of all tithes. Considering that half the Cabinet were dependent on tithes for a considerable portion of their incomes, it was obvious that the Government could not accept this, and it was only by an arrangement with Kesterton and his followers, who now commanded with the Labour Party a majority in a division, that defeat was for the time avoided.

The *Times* and the *Vox* found themselves in agreement when it came to mocking at the Government and applauding Kesterton.

"Good old Kesterton," wrote John Baptist in the *Vox*. "He has quite come round to our views now. A few more nails, a few more goads, and Libs. will be no more."

"Mr. Kesterton," said the *Times* leader, "is certainly the hero of the hour. We doubt if he perceives whither he is leading even his own party, but that he has already compassed the downfall of the Government there can be no question. Our own opinion is that the country, weary of these wrangles, will show its good sense, when the time of reckoning, now not far distant, arrives, by hurling the present Government party from power and returning the Unionists with a substantial majority."

The crash soon came. To our friend Bunks belongs the honour of having dealt the final blow. He proposed an amendment dealing with cathedral grammar schools, which he wanted to annex to the State for purposes of technical education. The Government hesitated. Sir James Hornby, in charge of the Bill, said one thing: the Chancellor of the Exchequer said exactly the opposite; and they were beaten by a majority of thirty-five.

"It's a big game you're playing, Jack," said Father John to Kesterton, as they sat over their cocoa, the following Sunday night at Limehouse.

"I know it, Father ; please pray for me."

"Do you think we shall get a majority?" asked Barton.

"It depends who is meant by 'we,'" replied Kesterton. "Do you mean the Liberals, or the Labour Party, or what?"

"I mean," said Barton, "your party, which consists of all the Labour men and what used to be called 'Liberal-Labour,' but had now better drop the title."

"There's the difficulty. We have got no name and the electors will be mystified. There was never a more personal election than this which is coming on. Tom may call himself a Liberal, and be no good. Dick may call himself an Anti-Tory, and be just the right thing. I wish we could get the Labour Party to recognise that a man may be an out-and-out supporter of theirs without necessarily being what is called a 'working man.'"

"There's another difficulty," said Barton. "Large numbers of Trade Unionists and others among the working men have come to see that the Labour Party means Socialism pure and simple. They are not Socialists themselves: they never meant to be, and they won't be, at least yet awhile. How will they vote now?"

"Perhaps they'll vote Liberal, or won't vote at all."

"And how about the Church?" said Father John. "Won't the Churchpeople vote solid for the Tories?"

"Certainly," said Kesterton, "they will not give the Liberals another chance if they can help it, but I think we may rake in a few to our side. Numbers of Church people have kindly feelings towards the Labour Party, and they have seen during this last year or so that the Labour Party has no present intention of disestablishing the Church."

"No *present* intention," said Barton. "That's true. That is because the Labour Party sees that the Church is popular, and to attack her is to waste time and court defeat."

But won't the day come when the Socialists will covet the revenues of the Church for secular purposes?"

"Yes," said Kesterton, "but by that time the purposes now called 'secular' will have ceased to be thought so. We shall have educated the Church to look upon technical education, medical supervision of children, higher education, municipal hospitals, old age pensions, even gas and water and trams and libraries as being religious objects. Then we shall cheerfully give up our endowments. Only we shall insist on having my Lord Barton's tithes as well."

"I see," said Barton. "It will be a new reformation of a more respectable type than the last one. Instead of confiscating the Church revenues to give them to Court favourites, the State will apply them to worthy objects such as you have mentioned."

"Quite so," said Kesterton, "but it means the education of Churchpeople to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, it means the education of the richer classes to surrender their property for the common wealth, it means educating the poor and the middle classes too in the desire for something not wholly materialistic, and it means renewing the Socialist ideal in a spiritual direction."

"That cannot be done in a month before the General Election," said Father John.

"No, but we can get on a long way before the election after next," replied Kesterton.

"Are you prepared, then, for a Tory reaction?" said Lord Barton.

"Yes," said Kesterton. "I shall be glad of it, it will give us time to breathe, and it will give Vincent Heathcote time to make his mark."

"Dear Vinney! He's already doing wonders at St. Silas'," said Father John. "In fact, he has begun this very education of which we have been speaking. His 'Catechism' of upper-class children is grand, and so are his conferences

on Thursday afternoons. He does his chief work of education in the middle of the week to avoid the week-ends when his flock fly to the country."

"Just now," said Barton, "they are all 'flying to the country' in another sense, and you, Jack, will have to do the same."

"My country is East London. I am going to stand for Limehouse this time."

"Hurrah!" said Father John, "you'll have a walk over here. Fancy the kids of our school on polling day! 'Vote for Brother Jack!'"

"Who's your opponent?" asked Barton.

"That old money-bag Vandertrust! He's giving up sausages and taking to politics. He hopes by sheer force of gold and motor-cars to win this seat."

"He won't have a chance against you," said Ball. "What fools the Tories are!"

"It ain't the Tories! He's running as a Liberal!" said Kesterton. "Remember I called myself a Liberal at the last election, and lots of people will think I have gone round to the Tories when they find I am opposing Vandertrust. Moreover, they all know I helped to turn the Government out. My seat is not safe here at all unless——"

"Unless what?" said Barton.

"Unless I run as a Churchman!"

"Call yourself 'Christian Progressive' and you'll capture the Countess of Huntingdon and all the Noncons."

"Shall I?—when they remember that I opposed Dis-establishment which Vandertrust supports?"

"Never mind," said Barton. "Father John hasn't worked here for nearly a quarter of a century for nothing. I believe that St. Martin's Mission can win the seat."

"Remember too," said Kesterton, "there's Mrs. Vandertrust to be reckoned with. She's awfully pretty. And

there's her mother, Mrs. Market Hatcham, with her golden hair."

"It's black this year," said Barton; "they won't like that: they'll think she's a Jewess."

"There's time to gild it again before the election," laughed Father John.

"Besides," said Barton, "we've got our ladies too. There's our dear Spicebox."

"And Mrs. Buttles," said Ball. "She's worth fifty Market Hatchams, which as how Buttles knew a thing or two about elections and threw eggs at the squire in '68, which as how the squire was unseated for bribery, which as how Brother Jack's a match for all the Blundertrusses and the Margaret Smashams in Lime'us!"

"Bless me," said Kesterton, laughing, "which as how it's nearly midnight and the printer's coming at eight o'clock to-morrow morning for my address. I must go upstairs and write it. Good night, dear fellows, and pray for me and for us all."

This was the address which the printer found when he called :—

*To the Electors, etc.*

"GENTLEMEN,

"His Majesty having dissolved Parliament I beg to solicit your votes to enable me to represent this division in the House of Commons after the Election. I come among you not wholly as a stranger, having for many years stayed for varying periods of time at St. Martin's Mission House in Gehazi's Rents, Limehouse, and having taken part in many of the Socialist meetings in this district. I am a Socialist and a supporter of the Labour Party. I believe that drastic legislation is required in order to set free the victims of the present industrial system and to enable them to live the lives God meant them to live. We are

living now, or trying to live, under many tyrannies—the tyranny of the ground landlords, the tyranny of the sweaters, the tyranny of the brewers, the tyranny of the capitalist. I do not believe that such tyrannies can be swept away in a day or a year, or in ten years. But I do believe we can make headway against them and bring about better conditions of life and labour for the masses of the people.

“At the beginning of the last Parliament I called myself a Liberal, and I fully intended to support His Majesty’s Government in useful social reforms. Latterly I have been compelled to oppose the Cabinet, chiefly because in my opinion they have wasted valuable time and energy in attacking the Church of England.

“Do not misunderstand me. I am a Churchman myself, but I have no desire to maintain the Establishment if the nation wishes it to come to an end. When the proper time comes I will support the Disestablishment and even the Disendowment of the Church, if by so doing I can further real social reform such as the education of our children and our young people. But for the present I am of opinion that the real object of attack should be the selfishness of men of all classes which has produced the tyrannies I have referred to. Why cripple the Church of England, which as you know in this district is trying to fight against sin and selfishness? How foolish to do this while leaving the tyrant free to be more selfish and covetous than ever? Moreover, comrades, the Church of England has got the means of converting the country to Socialism if you will help to convert the Church of England. Think what it means to have the whole country divided off into parishes, each presided over by a man who is bound by his profession to teach that every man is brother of everybody else. Why, I repeat, break up this excellent socialising institution?

"I come before you, then, not as a 'Liberal' nor yet as a 'Tory.' I hardly know what those nicknames mean. If you must have a name, call me a Christian Progressive or a Christian Socialist. I belong to no party. I am independent and I intend to remain so. If you send me to Parliament I shall work hard for you there. If you decline my services I shall go on working at St. Martin's Mission with 'Father John.' I shall not desert you even if you desert me.

"JACK KESTERTON.

"THE MISSION HOUSE,  
"GEHAZI'S RENTS."



## CHAPTER II

### VERSUS SAUSAGES

The Power of Love as the basis of a State has never been tried. What is strange, too, there never was in any man sufficient faith in the power of rectitude to inspire him with the broad design of renovating the State on the principle of right and love.—EMERSON

Men say to us Socialists, "Why kill the goose with the golden eggs?" We reply, "We have a nobler bird who lays the precious eggs of Love: her we shall not kill."

THERE was a meeting of the committee of the National Secularist Socialist League at Yeast Lodge, with John Baptist Heathcote in the chair. The League was very busy running twenty candidates of its own and giving its support to some hundred more in various parts of the country. Twenty was a small number for the League to have produced after all these years of agitation. Heathcote knew that the failure was due to his militant Secularism, but he would not own it. At the committee meeting Spikes proposed that the word "Secularist" should be omitted from the name of the League. He told Heathcote plainly that harm was being done to the Socialist cause by its retention. "English people won't have it," he said. "If they think we Socialists are atheists and are going in for 'free love' and the rest, then good-bye to Socialism in this country!"

This made Heathcote very angry. "You know," he said, "I have never advocated free love and you ought not to accuse me of it."

"I did not accuse you. It is not so much what we hold, as what people think we hold which matters. I am a

Secularist myself, but that does not blind my eyes. I can see that we are hindering the cause in England. We lost Vincent by it, far and away the most promising writer on our staff."

"He wasn't on the staff," said Heathcote.

"Nonsense, Editor, he was, and you know it. He inspired most of your articles in your best days. They are not so good now he's gone."

"Perhaps you'd like me to resign."

"Not at all. If you'll consent to omit that word 'Secularist' and say so publicly we shall win our seats at the Election. Otherwise we shall lose."

"Nothing will induce me to consent," said Heathcote. "If the committee wish to do it of course they can do so, but I shall resign the chairmanship."

"That settles it," said Spikes; "we must go on as we are."

"Now there's another question which raises the same difficulty," said Heathcote. "Our branch in East London wish to know if they are to support the candidature of Jack Kesterton. He's going to have a hard fight against a Yankee blood-sucker who calls himself a Liberal."

"Well, why not?" said Sugarstick.

"It's the same difficulty. Kesterton has written a lot of Christian balderdash in his address and we cannot support him."

"This seems an additional reason for changing our name," said Spikes.

"I thought you said that matter was settled," said Heathcote.

"Will you accept a compromise? If we consent to keep our name for the present as it is, may we support Kesterton?"

"Consider, first," said Heathcote, "if Kesterton ought to be supported. He has only just emerged from Liberalism. Is he to be trusted?"

"Mr. Chairman," said Spikes, "Kesterton is the coming man. I should not be surprised to see him the first Prime Minister of a Labour Government. There's got to be some giving and taking if we are ever going to succeed. Supposing, as is probable, there is to be a Tory majority at the next election. That means at least six more years of waiting. Probably it will be twelve or even twenty years before we get anything like a Labour Party in power. You will then be over sixty years old. Most of the Labour leaders are as old as you. Do you imagine for one moment that the King would send for a chap like Bunks or even for you? There will have to be a half-way house to complete Socialism. It is in a man like Kesterton that I see the Prime Minister of the future. Let us support him from the first."

"But he'll never give up his cursed superstition of Christianity; I know him well enough to be sure of that," said Heathcote.

"Never mind that," said Spikes. "You will find that will bring him more votes than he'll lose by it."

So Spikes won the day, and the National Secularist Socialist League threw all its energies into securing the return of the Christian candidate in Limehouse.

The battle raged furiously for ten days. Morning by morning Mrs. Market Hatcham drove her son-in-law candidate round the constituency in a yellow motor-car covered with placards, calling upon the people to vote for "Vandertrust and cheaper houses," "Vandertrust and religious liberty," "Vandertrust and lower rents," "Vandertrust and no priestcraft," "Vandertrust and no confession."

When the League announced its intention of supporting Kesterton another placard was added with the words, "Vandertrust is a Christian and gets no assistance from atheists."

The other side responded with "Kesterton gets no

assistance from sausages," though Lady Spicebox, who had chartered a rival motor-car, would not allow this to be put amongst her ammunition.

It was difficult to prophesy what would happen. The country generally was going against the Government and the Labour Party were doing badly. There being no Tory candidate in Limehouse, the contest resolved itself into a fight between Socialism, supported by the Church and the Secularists, against Liberalism, supported by Nonconformity and the moderate section of working men. The Tories held aloof, being equally afraid of the disestablishing Liberal and the Socialist Churchman. There was also much cross voting. The Nonconformists many of them loved Kesterton for himself. They felt that as Christians they were really more in sympathy with him than with a sceptical Dutch Yankee, who made his money by selling suspicious-looking sausages. The Liberals of the district, who still retained popular sympathies, could not but feel that the St. Martin's Mission contingent, which was the very soul of Kesterton's candidature, was more true to their way of thinking than the smart entourage of Mr. Vandertrust and his mother-in-law.

Who really cared for the people? The sausage-maker, who, if he failed to be returned, would probably go back to Chicago and never see Limehouse again? Or Jack Kesterton, who had worked amongst the poor at St. Martin's for years, and who had told them in his address, "If you desert me, I shall not desert you"?

Mrs. Market Hatcham, who for ten days was willing to let the babies in Gehazi's Rents lick the rouge off her cheeks—the only "liberal" substance about her? Or the Sisters at St. Martin's, who for years had sat day or night nursing the sick and tending to the bodily and spiritual wants of the people?

It was Mr. Bailey, the Cockney Liberal agent, with his

flaming posters about "Religious Liberty" and "No Confession" *versus* Father John Ball, with his cheery old countenance and his tender love for the souls of his children. If the "kids" had had votes Mr. Vandertrust would not have polled a single one. As it was, he managed to secure a little over 2000 and Jack Kesterton was returned with a majority of 587. What a scene was there when the numbers were announced at Limehouse Town Hall! For twenty minutes it was impossible for Mr. Vandertrust to get a hearing as he rose to move a vote of congratulation to his opponent. The crowd stretched far down the Commercial Road and massed itself about in the Limehouse churchyard. Women fainted, children screamed, dockers shouted themselves hoarse. "God bless you, Jack!" they cried. "No more sausages!" "Go back to Chicago!" "Here's your bloomin' motor, my Lidy!" Liberalism seemed to have been drowned in the docks. Not a cheer was raised for the Government. It was all "Kesterton!" "Jack!" "Father John!" "Lord Barton!" "Lady Spicebox!" even "Mrs. Buttles!"

At last Mr. Vandertrust, looking ghastly pale in the electric light, made a short speech, perhaps the sincerest speech he had made in Limehouse. He had liked Mr. Kesterton ever since he had known him. He respected him for his opinion which he honestly held. He was sure he would represent them fearlessly and faithfully in Parliament. Then Kesterton rose, pale too but radiant. Oh, how they yelled again! That highly original ditty, "For he's a jolly good fellow," was alternated with the Doxology sung by the Mission congregation interspersed among the multitude. Then there was silence as the new M.P. spoke.

"My comrades," he said, "first allow me to thank my opponent for his words, which I know came from his heart. He has fought fairly, and we have fought fairly too. We were enemies. We are now friends again. This is not a

party victory. It is simply that you, my comrades, have shown that you trust me to represent you in Parliament, whatever party may be in power. I believe not in party, but in Parliament; not in a section of reformers, but in reform; not in the classes or the masses, but in the nation; not in the predominance of sects, but in the kingdom of God. I thank my Socialist friends for their support. I am glad that they have come forward to help me, even though in some important matters they do not agree with me.

"Comrades, we are on the eve of a great struggle which may last many years. Already the Election results have made it certain that a Tory Government will take office. Never mind! We have work to do, which any Government worthy of the name must support us in doing. There are social reforms which must be carried through Parliament. If not, the Government which is coming will go again. Let us try to work together for social reforms. It is not Parliament alone that can do this, it is the people. It is what you, the people, want that really matters. It is what you, the people, really are that will make you want what is right. Let us have less drinking, less gambling. Let us have men and women who will, above all things, keep themselves pure and honest and loving. Look after your children. Bring them up to fear God and to serve their fellow-men. Then whatever party may have power in the House of Commons the nation will progress! I am now going to ask a parson to address you. We have two on the platform. Which shall it be? The Rev. Vincent Heathcote, son of the Editor of *Vox Populi*, or your old friend, Father John?"

Shouts of "The Father! The Father!" made it necessary for Ball to speak instead of Vincent.

"You will want but a few words from me," said the Father. "You were wrong to choose me instead of

Mr. Heathcote. We don't often hear him down here, while you hear me too often. However, I must obey our member of Parliament, first because he *is* our member, and second because 'we all love Jack.' I agree with all he has just said; in fact, he has preached you a better sermon than I could have done. Perhaps I ought to say a word about the Church, as this election has been fought partly on this subject. We shall not be disestablished just yet, and judging from Mr. Vandertrust's placards you will have to put up with 'priestcraft' a little longer. What does 'priestcraft' mean? It means the 'craft' or 'work' of a priest. Gentlemen, I have plied my craft here for twenty-four years, and Jack Kesterton has helped me to do it. I shall now continue to do it in peace. Three cheers for Jack."

Spikes then got up and spoke for the Socialist League, expressing his great pleasure at the result of the election. The crowd was getting restless and would not listen, but Vincent, who was sitting next to him, noticed that he avoided all reference to the secularism of the League, and even omitted the word when referring to it by name. "Even the *Vox*, then, is coming round," he thought to himself as he walked back to his diggings near Dukery Square. "How will it all end? The Tories are coming in; the Liberals are gone; the Labour Party is crippled. Yet I verily believe that the revolution has begun."



## CHAPTER III

### DUKERY SQUARE

In the midst of heedless mirth,  
In the midst of a whirl of sin,  
In the sound of Mammon's din  
To stay the men of earth.

In a world of weary mood  
To kindle the burning thought,  
From the fire of Heaven caught,  
Of a coming Brotherhood.—THE PROPHET

CLAUDE SMILEPEACE, Vicar of St. Silas', was a humble man, as his letter to Vincent Heathcote proved. He owned that he had not succeeded in realising his ideal as vicar of the most important church in West London. He had deliberately called to his assistance a young clergyman, as yet quite untried in any department of clerical work, one who, a few years before his ordination, had called himself an atheist, one holding political views in supposed antagonism to the vast majority of the parishioners and congregation of St. Silas, a man who came from a class hitherto considered unpresentable in Dukery Square, unless it had purged itself by making enough money to buy itself an entrance within the sacred circle of the aristocracy. True, the great-great-grandfathers of many of the inhabitants of St. Silas' parish had worked with their hands, and some had even been in prison or hanged for high treason, but Vincent Heathcote's parentage was too recently humble and too poor to make him at



once acceptable to the rich. Yet Mr. Smilepeace had made the venture, and the result had justified the attempt. During that week at Alabaster Court the vicar had said little, but he had thought and prayed much. He had felt, as many others had felt, that the Church was not commending itself even to the earnest among the upper classes.

Over and over again he had heard people say that "going to church" did them no good. Smilepeace was convinced, and rightly convinced, that this was not due to blank irreligion. On the contrary, it was his experience that some of the least earnest people "went to church," while others of a much more devout nature stayed away. He used to examine the books on the table when he called at the houses round Dukery Square, and discovered that his parishioners were by no means wholly given up to the idolatry of French novels. There were mystical books, both ancient and modern, which had evidently been read and studied. They were yearning after a religion that they could really experience. They wanted to meditate, but the modern Anglican "religion" seemed to give them nothing upon which to meditate. It sounded well without, but it did not answer to the yearning within. Hence the little books which the vicar had distributed at the beginning of Lent about *Church Doctrine* and *The Meaning of Our Ritual* were untouched, while the weird musings of some American heretic were eagerly devoured.

It seemed likely to Smilepeace that this young Heathcote with his intense piety and simplicity, coupled with fiery enthusiasm for social reforms, bringing the practice of religion and the doctrine of the Gospel into direct and immediate relationship to the acts and facts of every-day life, would create a new ideal in the minds of the people, and make them see why it was of some use to go to church.

So he had invited him to come. The Community of the Kingdom of God had readily granted his request, and at the time of the great political change described in the last chapter Vincent had been established at St. Silas' for more than a year, and was an ordained priest. At first people talked about "a round man being in a square hole," but on reflection they came to see that, even if he were so, he might have been called by God for the work. Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, the typical Jew, was called by his Master to bear His name not to the Jews, but to the Gentiles. So Vincent Heathcote, the poor man, the man whose mind was quite out of touch with that of the aristocracy, might be called to bear a message to Dukery Square.

His very ignorance of the ways of smartness was really his strength. He treated the rich as he would the poor or the middle classes. To him they were all his brothers and sisters, who should all be disciples of Jesus, and to whom Christ had given the right to become the sons of God. In his sermons he was not for ever trying to say something "original," or something that would commend itself to the supposed higher intellect of an Oxford or Cambridge man. In Lent, when he preached courses of sermons at St. Martin's Mission and at St. Silas' in one week, he took a delight in giving the same sermon in both places. "The only difference," he used to remark with a smile, "is that I have to put it more simply to the West-Enders, because they do not know so much as Mrs. Buttles."

On the other hand, he took great pains to study the rich and their special temptations. He considered carefully what kind of religious education the majority of them had had, and he paid great attention to the probable influence of environment. If in old days he had thought that the poor children in humble homes were worse off religiously than the children of the rich, he now saw what special dangers there were to the characters of boys and

girls brought up in a selfish and worldly atmosphere at home and at school. How widely different is the position of a little boy sent to a public school at the age of thirteen and kept there till he is nineteen and that of another going out to work in a factory at the same age and made into a fully developed "working man" when the public-school boy is just going to Oxford. He saw, too, why selfishness and covetousness and pleasure-seeking are the special temptations of the rich, and wondered with a smile that his father thought that all this could be swept away by Act of Parliament.

He sometimes asked himself whether it would not be better to wait and live under a Tory Government for thirty years while the people, both rich and poor, were being made morally ready for the political revolution which he still hoped would come. He was afraid, however, that the Socialists would not be contented to wait so long, and rather than run the risk of a purely Secularist movement of "reform" he determined to do all in his power to force the Church to bestir itself and to call upon all men to repent at once ere it was too late.

His plan was to educate the young and the elder members of the congregation within the circle of St. Silas' that they might set an example to the rest. "God's mills grind slowly," he would say, "but they are *God's* mills, and the flour will come in time with which to make the bread of life."

Vincent was a practical man. He saw that the "week-end" fashion played havoc with the Sunday work at St. Silas'. He trusted that in time the more Christian members of the congregation would deem it worth while to stay in London rather than lose the opportunity of worship which the Lord's Day afforded. But he did not rate the people for not "keeping Sunday." "Why should they wish to keep the Lord's Day if they do not †

in the Lord?" he said. "Is it not better to teach them in Prayer Book language that the fourth commandment is to be kept by Christians in 'serving God truly all the days of my life'?" Meantime he instituted a Thursday evening "conference" at five o'clock for grown-up people and a catechism for children also in the week, as well as another on Sundays. At the conference he would speak for half an hour on some point of theology or political economy. Then he would allow questions to be asked, or he would answer questions that had been sent him during the week. He began these conferences with an address on the Gospel life. This was the basis of his message as it had been the basis of the life of the Community at Fenwick.

He took the prologue of the fourth Gospel and expounded it in connection with the Nicene Creed. In familiar language he explained that from all eternity there had been within the Godhead, Father and Son united in the bond of Spirit; that Life consists in the love of God towards His Son and the love of the Son to the Father. This love of the Son is expressed by the Word of God. The Word became Flesh. Christ, who is the Son, took our human nature, and expressed in the outward manifestation of a human life this eternal life of love. Disciples or learners gathered round Him, and realised this same life of Sonship in a holy companionship with Him and with each other. They were enabled by Him to put away sin, which is the contradiction of this life of love and renders it impossible of growth. They were "made clean" by the word He spoke to them. When He passed into the unseen they believed that His Spirit remained with them, rendering it possible for them to possess permanently this holy companionship which they had enjoyed visibly during His earthly presence. They in their turn called others into this unity of fellowship, and thus the Church began.

"The Church," said Vincent, "is still with us. We should expect the same effects to be produced amongst us that were produced by the Spirit in those early days."

Then on another Thursday he would develop this thought, showing how, moved by the Spirit, the rich made themselves poor and the poor became rich, how they were of one heart and one soul, how they changed the whole course of civilisation, not by a programme such as "Socialism" or "Toryism" or "Liberalism," but by simply living out in practical life their creed.

"For many years this spirit of the first Christians lived on and worked wonders of social reform. Within the Christian society, and even outside it, its effects were seen. Sick people, widows, strangers, orphans, unemployable workers were helped by the sympathy and alms of their fellow Christians. It is only because in the course of ages we have separated our creed from our life that Christian society has got mixed with the world, and poverty and misery are now side by side with luxury and idleness, while professing Christians continue to perform their worship in isolation from practical acts of love."

Another week he would take some great modern prophet like Ruskin and comment upon his words and writings.

"Think of this," he said. "*There is no wealth but life.* Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.'

"Read that side by side with the Lord's words, 'Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life. I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abund-



antly'—or St. John's, 'He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life.'"

He tried to get to the root of social problems, believing with Bishop Westcott that every social problem is at the bottom a moral, nay, even a religious problem. He would invite business men to come to the conferences and speak quite frankly of their difficulties in applying Christianity to trade. He banded together a Consumers' League who should try to avoid in their purchases what leads to "sweating." He discussed with landlords and others questions of agricultural reform, the wages of labourers, the housing problem, trying to get them to approach these matters as Christians definitely committed by their creed to a higher standard of life than that of the world.

He never denounced people in his sermons, though he was very stern in the appeals he made to their consciences. He aimed at the spiritual co-operation of all who honestly wanted to serve God in the midst of a wicked world.

Gradually he got round him a smaller body of persons who wished to put into practice what he taught them. St. Martin's Mission was the practising ground for many of them. They went there not in the spirit of fashionable "slummers," but to get to know their brothers and sisters. "District visiting" became a service and yet a joy to them. Vincent insisted on their making themselves acquainted with the practical needs of the district. No mere "cheque charity" was permitted. Father John was consulted on all matters. It was found that the chief work to be done by women was to organise the girls of the rope and jam factories into unions and to help them to lead a happier and more self-restrained life. Any crying evils in the conditions of their work were immediately reported to Jack Kesterton and Lord Barton, and formed the subject of questions in the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively.

Thus there grew up a new "society," not called by any name, nor officered by any particular chairman or secretary, but yet social and brotherly in the truest sense. A bond of union was brought about between Church and State, rich and poor, clergy and members of Parliament.

Dukery Square became interested in life generally. When it read its paper it did not only scan the Court Circular or delight in learning that the "beastly Radicals" had been well beaten on a division in favour of conscription or Chinese labour. It was really pleased to know that the Home Secretary was looking into the question of dangerous trades and that the school children were going to be fed. When it went to church it was not only glad to hear an eloquent sermon about some moral virtue which it was not tempted to transgress, or an elaborate anthem of which it could not hear or understand the words, but it began to wish to get in tune with the infinite God in worship and to realise that in the Lord's Supper the disciples do as truly assemble round the Master's table as when in that upper room at Jerusalem Peter and James and John sat by His side and listened to His words of love.

With the children Vincent was no less successful. The "Catechism" was not like the dull "Sunday School" which they had been taken to when they sat in the pews and listened while the "kids" of the lower orders answered all the questions which they had been taught and their "betters" had not. Nor did it resemble the "Scripture lesson" in which their unfortunate governesses had tried to interest them in the three missionary journeys of St. Paul or the colours of the Temple hangings or the gums used by Moses in the manufacture of incense.

Mr. Heathcote, or "the curate with the jolly face," as they called him, took for his model the saintly Bishop Dupanloup, and organised a "Catechism," partly on French

lines and partly on lines of his own. A thorough grounding in the Creed was his first object. "Dukery Square," he said, "doesn't know what it believes. The children shall learn it just as they learn which side to put their knives and forks and why they mustn't spill the jam over the table." On the other hand, he guarded against teaching them in such a way that "religion" appeared to them as something apart from life. He knew how they lived in their schoolrooms and their playrooms; he knew how they romped in the Square and walked in the Park; he knew their little ambitions to possess a bicycle or a toy motor-car; he knew the kind of schools they were going to soon, the pantomimes they visited at Christmas, the occupations and amusements of their life in the country, the village people they would come across in the summer holidays, and so on. From this he took his illustrations when he gave his instructions and his "homily." And always he drew them on to a personal love for our Lord and for His poor.

He made them read the Gospel story out loud in church, and insisted upon every word being heard by all present. And he explained to them the meaning of everything in the church and the services that were held. With the children, too, as with the grown-up people, he got in close touch with a smaller number who looked earnestly forward to their confirmation, when they would be expected to carry out the duty towards God and the duty towards their neighbours more practically. "How are you boys going to learn and labour truly to get your own living?" he would say. "Remember you've got to do it if you are Church boys." Or again: "Who are your 'betters'? Are they those who are more rich or those who are more good?" Answer: "My betters are those who are more good." Or, "Are we to teach our brothers and sisters who are poor to be content and not to wish to move



on from the position in which it has pleased God to call them?" "No; we are to teach them to do their duty in that state of life unto which it *shall* please God to call them, and we are to do it ourselves also." "Does charity mean giving money?" Answer: "No; charity means love."

He taught the children a new "chivalry," which he used to define as "the care of the weak by the strong," showing them that as the knights in old days protected the weak from injustice and oppression, so now they were to look forward to bringing justice to the poor. He insisted on their showing a great respect to the poor, on their recognising the dignity of work, and the dependence of all men on one another. He got them interested in the industrial workers as much as they were already interested in soldiers and sailors.

He was specially careful with any children who he knew were likely to be very rich, teaching them that that would in no way exempt them from the duty to work. So attractive was the "Catechism" that when the Eton boys came back for the holidays they would ask to be allowed to go and hear Mr. Heathcote "jaw," and very often during the school half he would receive a letter such as this from some little friend, one of his former pupils:—

"DEAR MR. HEATHCOTE,

"I've got a beastly set of Sunday Q.'s to do. I wish you were here to help me answer them. Perhaps you can tell me what to say next week when the beak I'm up to sets a new lot of Q.'s. He says being an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven means going to Heaven when you die. You told us last Catechism it meant that we were in a sort of Heaven now. I believe you are right. Can't both be. My tutor says Socialism is very dangerous. I believe you're a Socialist, but I don't think you danger-

ous, I think I shall sure to be in Sixpenny this half. Shall you be at Lord's? There's a boy called Market Hatcham in our house who says that man Kesterton's a dirty scug. I thought he was a friend of yours. My Major told Market Hatcham he was a skunk to say so. My Major's in Pop, and he's going to make a speech about Socialism. Will you tell him what to say? He asked me to ask you. I expect he'll be in the eleven. Mr. Heathcote, were you at Eton? Jones Minor wants to know. Do they sell good cricket balls at the Stores? Your affectionate friend and old Catechism boy,

"FRED."

"What would my father say?" thought Vincent, when he received a letter of this kind. "To think that I, a Heathcote, should be corresponding with the son of a bloated blood-sucker. Yet this little chap may do more for the England that is to be than all the staff of the *Vox* put together. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!"

## CHAPTER IV

### SWAMPTON

The problem before us is how to set a city of many classes on raising, not one of its parts, but the whole. How may rich and poor learn to consider one another and work for some common end? How may the human, flickering instincts of respect and sympathy be cherished so that they may fuse into one body the men and women divided by their interests as employers and employed? How may pride in the city—its beauty, its health, its happiness—take the place of pride in the dominance of one class? The problem presses.

CANON BARNETT

SWAMPTON returned two Liberals to Parliament. It was a stronghold of Liberationism though (or perhaps because) it was a cathedral city. The importance of abolishing the Confessional was considered by the electors to outweigh the necessity of checking the rate of infant mortality, of pulling down Lord Swampshire's rookeries, of inspecting the potteries where lead poisoning was rife, of lessening the number of public-houses, of providing open spaces, a free library or electric trams. Nobody except a few Irishwomen and two ex-members of St. Clara's congregation from London, who were employed in the potteries, had ever been to confession in Swampton in their lives, but eighty-five per cent of the children were born healthy and died before they were three months old; fourteen cases of death from poisoning were reported in the twelve months before the Election and three hundred and thirty-seven cases of illness: there was a tavern for every sixty-four of the adult population; typhoid cases in the back-to-back cottages had gone up ten per thousand; there was no

public recreation ground and no bath; there were two prosecutions for street betting on a weekly average, and it took a man three-quarters of an hour to get from the Market Place to the country in the horse tram. Was it surprising that the two Socialist candidates came out at the bottom of the poll, and the two Liberal gentlemen, a grocer and a rent collector, went off to Westminster in triumph to try to prevent the two potters from making their peace with God?

"There's progress!" as the hippopotamus said after sitting for a week on the duck's eggs.

It was to this benighted place that one summer evening a blue-painted van was being drawn by a pair of strong cart-horses. Inside the van were two Brothers of the Community of the Kingdom of God, Brother Mark and Brother Matthew. Every year the Community sent out their van to preach the Kingdom of God in some district where it seemed to them that the Gospel was insufficiently believed. This does not mean that they chose a place where there were no churches or chapels, or a place where the churches were empty or where few people could say they were "saved." It means that they sought out a place where from outward appearances the glorious power of the Healer of men had not yet come to bind up the broken-hearted and to bring deliverance to the captives. The evils mentioned above seemed to the Brothers a proof that the enemies of the Saviour were in possession. Nor did they trust only to the ordinary methods of a "Mission" as generally understood. There was preaching; there were penitent forms; there were hymns. But there was more, both before and after the Mission. Long before the missionaries arrived at Swampton they had been studying at Fenwick the particular needs of the place to which they were going. They had tried to discover the sources of some of the social degradations to which the place had sunk.

It was clear, for example, that our friend, Lord Swampshire, was responsible for the slums. It was also notorious that he was what is called a "good Churchman." He must be approached. Inquiries made among the betting men revealed the fact that though street betting was bad, betting in factories was more common and unrestrained. Could not the factory owners be asked about this? They were also informed by their friends, the two unsuccessful Socialist candidates, that all attempts to deal with municipal reform such as the regulation of the taverns, the education of the mothers in rearing their children, the provision of libraries, trams, etc., were being thwarted by certain members of local bodies who were at the same time prominent in the religious circles of the town. Here, again, was work to be done apart from preaching.

The Mission was calculated to last about three months. This would give time to make a real impression. The two Brothers began by calling upon Lord Swampshire.

Plantagenet Granby, tenth Earl of Swampshire, was by no means the ogre that the Socialists had painted him. His neglect of Swampton was chiefly due to a stupid kind of ignorance, and to the fact that, with the exception of his Christmas visit to Alabaster Court, nothing had ever brought home to him that there was any connection between his religion and the management of his property. He had inherited about two-thirds of Swampton from a spendthrift uncle, together with the title. For the fifty years during which Swampton had grown from being a little village of five hundred inhabitants to being a town of eighty thousand, the property had never been looked upon by the Swampshire earls and their agents except as a mine of growing wealth in the shape of ground rents. No representative of the family had ever served on a municipal body or taken any interest in the life of



place. Ten pounds a year had been paid to the Vicar at Christmas for coals and blankets, and twenty to the Conservative Association. Both subscriptions were grudgingly paid, for it was known that the church was empty on Sundays, and no Tory had ever yet been returned to Parliament owing to the strong dissenting vote. In addition to these munificent gifts the Earl had subscribed one guinea towards the Lenten concerts in the cathedral, and another for the new heating apparatus.

Lord Swampshire in early life had had no idea that he would ever possess Swampton. He had been used to saving every halfpenny for himself and his family, having only a small allowance out of the bankrupt estate of his uncle who gambled. The death of his cousin and his uncle within three months of each other suddenly placed him on the Swampshire throne. It was therefore partly excusable that he had not struck out a new line and taken a more human interest in his property than his predecessors had done. But the indignation meetings of the Socialists who, next to the Nonconformists, were the most powerful people in Swampton, and the knowledge of what men like Lord Barton and Jack Kesterton were saying and doing, had caused Lord Swampshire of late to make inquiries into the condition of his "rookeries," as they were called.

He had been met with the usual replies which the estate agents had always given to any earl who dared to show the glimmerings of a conscience. The cottages were no worse than others in Swampton and the surrounding towns. The tenants were to blame for not keeping themselves clean. The ground landlord could do nothing till the leases fell in. It was noticeable that when the leases did fall in the agents did not recommend the Earl to do more than ask for a premium and a higher rent.

Swampshire was therefore not altogether in a bad

mood when Brothers Mark and Matthew called upon him. They had armed themselves with an introduction from Vincent Heathcote, for they knew that he had met the Earl at Alabaster Court.

"What is your business, gentlemen?" he said.

"We have come," said Brother Matthew, "to hold a Mission in Swampton."

"Oh, if you want a subscription you must go to my agent, Mr. Dowdle, in the High Street. But I warn you that I already subscribe to the church funds every year, and I don't think I can do any more."

"We don't want any money at all," said Matthew.

"Well, you're the first parson I ever came across who didn't," said Lord Swampshire, laughing.

"We are not ordinary parsons," remarked Brother Mark; "we have no parish. As Wesley said, 'The world is our parish.'"

"So, you've come to do us good in Swampton, have you? Well, we want it badly. A more drunken, gambling set of blackguards it would be difficult to find."

"That brings us at once to the point, my lord," said Brother Matthew. "Why are they drunken? Partly is it not because there are too many public-houses on your estate?"

"Oh, I could not prevent that."

"You surely need not have taken £30,000 the other day for the 'Green Man,' which you were petitioned by 1400 inhabitants to pull down or turn into a coffee-house."

"You seem to know my affairs," said Lord Swampshire, rather pettishly.

Matthew went on unconcerned.

"Why do they gamble? Partly because the factory owners don't stop it, but partly also because you let them live in such miserable houses that they are forced to seek some dissipation away from them. How could you live

without some such quiet room or beautiful garden as this? Why do you think that your neighbour can?"

"I don't see what this has got to do with a Mission in Swampton."

"It has everything to do with it," said Brother Mark. "It is absurd for us to suppose we are bringing God's message to Swampton if we leave you out, the principal Swampton man."

It was quite a new idea to Lord Swampshire to think of himself as the "principal Swampton man." He could not help laughing, though he felt rather cross with these self-possessed and dogmatic parsons.

"What do you want me to do?"

"We want you to repent," said Brother Matthew.

"Now, that is impertinent," said Lord Swampshire. "You know nothing whatever about my Church life. As a matter of fact, if you did, you would know that I am a very regular churchgoer."

"We know all about it," said Mark. "You used to go to St. Silas' in London, but you have left off lately because you do not like Heathcote's preaching. When you are at home you go to the village church once a Sunday, and you sometimes drive into Swampton when there's a special preacher at the cathedral. But that's not repentance. Repentance means a change of mind. We want you to change your mind about your Swampton property, and we want you to do it for Jesus Christ's sake."

"This is a queer religion," said Lord Swampshire, "and yours is a very queer Mission. I thought at a Mission you asked people if they were saved."

"So we do," said Matthew. "We want you to be saved—saved from selfishness which keeps you from caring about those poor tenants of yours—saved from covetousness which makes you want to squeeze more rent out of them."



There was a pause, during which the priests were praying silently, and the Earl was thinking whether he should ring the bell and order them out, or whether he should write once more to Dowdle and ask him to report again on the slums.

At last he spoke.

"Gentlemen, I admire your pluck in coming here. I should not have dared do it. I don't think you know all about me as you say you do. I have not been brought up to think about these things as having anything to do with my religion. I will consider what you say. I will write to my agent. I will go and hear Heathcote preach again when I go back to London. Good morning."

"One thing more, my lord," said Brother Matthew. "Won't you go and see the rookeries yourself? Don't trust to Mr. Dowdle."

"I make no promises. Good morning."

The Brothers then made their way to Mr. Jameson, one of the principal town councillors. They chose him because he was the most outwardly religious man in Swampton. There was no "charity" to which he did not subscribe, no "bazaar" he was unwilling to open. He had an enormous influence in the place, and it was commonly said that what he wished to-day Swampton wished to-morrow. He was the chief potter in the district, and employed the bulk of those engaged in the staple industry.

"I don't like the look of you," he said as Matthew and Mark entered the private room at the works into which they were ushered. "I expect you belong to some of these High Church secret societies. We don't want any of them in Swampton."

"We belong to no secret societies," said Matthew, "but we belong to the Church of England, to which I believe you also belong."

"Well, I suppose I do, but give me a man whose heart

is in the right place, and I don't mind what he belongs to."

"Not even if he belongs to a secret society?" said Mark.

"I draw the line at that and at the Catholics, though I've helped the nuns before now. They do a lot of charity, and that's what I like. Give what you can spare to the poor. It'll always be repaid you in the next world."

"Why not give them justice, Mr. Jameson?" said Brother Matthew. "Haven't you any to spare in Swampton?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you have had plenty of opportunities since you have lived in Swampton of granting the people things which they have asked for and which they justly deserve, but you have the reputation of having always refused or prevented others from acceding to their requests."

"You are talking Greek to me," said Jameson.

"Well," said the Brother, "first there's your own business. You are king of the potteries here, and whatever custom or practice you adopt, all the other potters will follow suit. While in other parts of the country efforts are being made to cope with lead poisoning, you are said to turn a deaf ear to all entreaties, and to do no more than the law actually enforces or the Home Secretary orders. The average of sickness in your place of business is worse than in any other."

"Do you know, young man, how the Rothschilds made their fortunes?" said Jameson.

"Yes," said Matthew, who knew this chestnut catch. "By minding their own business; and that is why I want you to do the same and be as rich as they."

Brother Mark then chimed in, and spoke of the many municipal needs of Swampton, which the Town Council

majority thwarted in every way, being led by Mr. Jameson himself.

"You, sir," he said, "have it in your power to make Swampton a little paradise on earth. Why don't you do it?"

"Look here, young man," said the worthy councillor, "you're not my father confessors."

"No," said Matthew, "we don't remember having shriven you. We are here on a Mission, and we are saying these things to you by way of preparation."

"Mission, indeed! What the——"

"Now don't use bad language, for I saw at the office as I came in that the men who use it are fined out of their wages for doing so. It would not do for the governor to show a bad example. We don't want to quarrel with you; we want you to help us and to throw in your lot with us in making Swampton a happier, better place."

Mr. Jameson had never been spoken to like this before. It was a new sensation. He was beginning to like it.

"What puzzles me, young men, is to know where the religion comes in. I went to a Mission at our church here a year or two back, and I was under the impression it was all about heaven and hell."

"So is ours," said Mark. "Our motto is that of the mad priest, John Ball: 'Fellowship is heaven; lack of fellowship is hell.' Swampton is hell, because there is no fellowship. We want to make it into heaven by getting you to live in fellowship with the potters and the slum dwellers and the gamblers—and the Socialists."

"Great Scott! you don't want me to be a Socialist, I hope," said Jameson. "They are a lot of atheists, and you reverend gentlemen had better have nothing to do with them."

"On the contrary, they are all friends of ours, and there

are only three atheists among them—Jack Osprey, Dick Thane, and Bob Miles."

"You've forgotten that cursed Heathcote, who started all this rubbish here twenty years ago, and his whipper-snapper of a boy, who, I am told, is as bad as his father."

"I did not mention Heathcote," said Matthew, "because he has left Swampton so many years, and lives in London. His son, whom you call a whipper-snapper, is now one of the most well-known clergymen in West London."

"Is he indeed? And what made him turn over a new leaf?"

"He did what we want you to do. He saw that Social Reform and Christianity must go together. He was a Socialist and became a Christian. You are a Christian and should become a Socialist."

"Well, I'm blessed! Will you come to lunch and talk it over?"

"Not to-day, thank you," said Matthew; "but we'd like to look round the pottery and have a talk with your men if we may."

These are only samples of the "Mission work" of the Brothers. From the potteries they went on to the leather dressing factory to probe the conscience of the Christian proprietors on the subject of anthrax, said to be rampant in their works. Most of the employers in Swampton were prominent members of church or chapel, who had never thought until these evangelists came to the place that there was any connection between the Gospel and such mundane matters as bronzing, enamelling, aniline black dyeing, lucifer matches, and wall-paper. With the Report on Factories and Workshops in one hand and the New Testament in the other, these two young men led these religious people such a dance as they had never experienced before.

Day by day and night by night they laboured for



three months in Swampton. There was very little excitement except at some of the meetings in the Town Hall, organised by the Socialists, at which Matthew got so full of his subject that he nearly burst and the crowd were beside themselves with enthusiasm. But for the most part their work was with individuals or with existing Bible classes and guilds. They attended churches, chapels, societies, committees, both religious and political. They preached in the cathedral. At the end of three months they could not have told you how many "conversions" they had made or how many had found salvation.

But the angels knew and rejoiced, for the seed had been sown which would bear fruit. The Kingdom of God was among the men of Swampton, and a change was coming.

## CHAPTER V

### LORDS AND COMMONS

I ask the reader to discover for himself how much pity we bestow upon the "prisoners and captives," how much provision we make for the "fatherless children and widows," what nature and amount of "succour, help, and comfort" we vouchsafe to "all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation." I ask him to consider, with regard to those "kindly fruits of the earth," who produces and who enjoy them. And I beg him next to proceed in a judicial spirit, by means of candour and right reason, to examine fairly and weigh justly the means proposed by Socialists for abolishing poverty and oppression, and for conferring prosperity, knowledge, and freedom upon *all* men.

ROBERT BLATCHFORD

"BARTY will be here directly to take us to the House of Lords," said Lady Spicebox to Vincent Heacote, as they sat in the drawing-room at her house in Dukery Square after luncheon.

"He seems to be doing a splendid work there, does he not?" said Vincent.

"Ay, and all that," said Lady Spicebox. "What days we are living in, Vinney, and all because of you!"

"Nonsense, Lady Spy, I have done nothing really. God has guided me, and you have all helped me."

"I hope I have been able to do something in my own stupid way and all that," smirked her ladyship.

"I say it truly," said Vincent, "you have done much. Right away from the first you have stuck to us. You have been a little bridge over which we have been able to dart quickly from upper to lower, from east to west, from the drab to the smart, from labour to capital."

"I know I have said a lot of foolish things," said Lady Spy, "but I'm better now."

"Merry things, shall we say?" laughed Vincent. "I have said the foolish things. Lady Spy, did I make a great fool of myself at Alabaster Court that Christmas time? I never asked you this before."

"No, indeed, Vinney. You were wonderful. I was surprised that you fell into our ways so quickly."

"I was helped by William, you know."

"Dear William! He's a treasure. The silly boy wants to be ordained now. I tell him he had much better stay where he is and convert the servants."

"That reminds me, Lady Spy. Ought we not to do more for the servants? How patient and good they are! When I was at Fenwick I was taught to be recollected and quiet, always ready to obey the Superior and to wait upon his every word and whim. But to do this we were told we must pray and meditate and be always on our guard. Now it seems to me that you rich people require of your servants a "recollectedness" and a patience by the side of which the demand made on a monk in a monastery is as child's play. Every morning you come downstairs and expect to find everything clean and tidy and put in its proper place by the housemaids; you expect your meals to be served to the minute, your letters to be posted, your clothes to be kept neat. Woe be to the servant who forgets the smallest thing or fails to remind you of an engagement which you may have forgotten. All this they have to do without a murmur—at least, without a murmur that can be heard upstairs. They must go on doing it whatever happens, whatever personal sorrow they may encounter, or whatever languidness they may chance to be feeling. I don't say this is wrong. It is part of the "order" of a well-arranged household. But it is making a great moral demand, and I sometimes wonder if we appreciate their achievements or assist them as we should."

"How delightful you are, Vinney! Here have I been

living with servants all my life and never thought of what you say before. What shall we do? Shall we have a Bible Class?"

"That might not be bad, only I don't think they would come. We might have a conference for servants as we have for the congregation. But I think more might be done by the masters and mistresses. Could we not get back the old feeling of retainership which used to be in the houses of the great? Again, ought not the Christian employers to make it easier for their servants to practise their devotions? How difficult it must be for the servants in Dukery Square!"

"William manages somehow," said Lady Spicebox.

"There are many other things I would like to suggest about servants," said Vincent. "I should like you, Lady Spicebox, to start all kinds of reforms amongst them. How are they ever to get interested in civic questions? Could you not provide them with a library, good books and newspapers? Could you not bring your lady's maid to some of our Socialist meetings? And why should you not give them the opportunity of leading a more human life? They are our brothers and sisters too, you know, as much as the working folk. Do you help them, for instance, to cultivate their tastes in amusements, studies, arts?"

"Well, we must talk this over again, Vinney. But here's my Lord Barton, so we must think of something else."

"Hullo, Gladys!" said Barton, coming into the room; "hard at it as usual. What's the latest reform?"

"Servants," said Lady Spicebox.

"A good subject," said he; "but I have got important news."

"What is it?" said Vincent.

"The debate on my Bill comes on in the Lords to-day,



and Kesterton will introduce it into the Commons tomorrow."

"You're the friend of the children, Barton," said Vincent. "Your proposals about State feeding and technical education and medical inspection and all the rest of it are a real charter for the children."

"Will the Government support you?"

"I think so," said Barton. "It is remarkable how many old-fashioned people are coming round to what we believe is preparing the way for Socialism; the bishops are with me to a man, or a lawn sleeve. Men like Lord Swampshire and even Lord Haypence are quite friendly."

"They won't go all the way with us," said Vincent, "when they discover what we are at."

"That's true," said Barton. "But it all tends to clear the air, and to range on two sides the coming parties of the future. Old watchwords are passing away, and in time we shall have a new assortment. There will be a point where statesmen of one side will stop and decline to sanction any more 'State interference,' as they call it. We who believe the people are the 'State' will go on 'interfering with ourselves,' and we shall carry the masses with us."

"Jossy says it's 'grandmotherly legislation,'" said Lady Spicebox.

"But as an old priest used to say whom I knew in my youth," said Barton, "'Every man is now his own grandmother.' The State is no longer a fussy old lady telling us what we must do and what we must not do. We are, as I have said, the 'State,' and are cheerfully doing things for ourselves, acquiescing in reforms as right and good for us in themselves."

"I must try and get that down," said Lady Spicebox, "so that next time Jossy goes for me I shall be able to tell him to keep his hair on. 'Every man his own grand-

mother'—that's good. O Barty and Vinney, you do lead me a life with my old Whig of a husband. You forget that I am alone in this house with him, and I have to defend all your schemes and pranks. First it's a sermon of Vinney's he has heard, for he attends St. Silas' now regularly; then it's a speech of Jack Kesterton's; then it's Barty's Garden City Bill. By the way, Barty, how's that getting on?"

"I have been so much occupied with the children that I have had no time to attend to the Municipal Land Purchase Bill which you call my Garden City Bill. It's down for second reading next week."

"It is quite a new order of things that social reform should begin in the Lords and end in the Commons," said Vincent.

"That's what comes of having a Socialist peer," said Lady Spicebox.

"My Bills will not of course pass," said Lord Barton. "But it does good to get them on paper and before the country. The House of Lords is an excellent place for this kind of work. We have plenty of time to debate things, and some useful suggestions are almost always made, even if the Bill is thrown out in the end. I intend to bring forward, one after another, a series of Socialistic Bills that the Lords may discuss them and the country may judge of them. I am working with the Labour Party in this, and we draft these Bills together. I want the bishops to share this work with me. Fancy how grand it would be for the Archbishop of Canterbury to bring forward a great charter of social reform embodying, say, to begin with, all the thirty or more recommendations of the Commission on Physical Deterioration! It would not matter if the House of Commons was not ready for it and rejected it. We should be able to say, 'See, that is what the Church by its official representative considers to be the desiderata

of social reform.' It would be like the old days, when the Church worked with the people against the sovereign power on the side of freedom."

"The bishops in the House of Lords might be the Labour Party of the second Chamber," said Vincent. "They might be the most popular men in England, and popular, mark you, for the only reason for which it is right for a Christian to be popular."

"You mean," said Barton, "that, like our Lord, they would be heard gladly by the common people?"

"Yes, they would lead the people," said Vincent. "You see, the Church does not stand out now in people's minds as a society at all. To join the Socialist societies means to have a definite programme which you mean to help in carrying out. We know what our Labour leaders want us to do. No Churchman knows what the bishops want us to do, except, perhaps, to give up burning incense."

"How glorious!" said Lady Spicebox, clapping her little hands and waving a red antimacassar over her head. "It only wants *Vox Populi* bound up with the *London Diocesan Magazine* to complete it!"

Vincent smiled, but, becoming serious again, asked Lord Barton whether he thought the prayers said at the beginning of the sittings of Parliament were less formal than they used to be.

Barton sighed and said,

"Perhaps we are getting a little better. Both Kesterton and I are gradually collecting a few members of both Houses who will be more in earnest about them. But there is more hope in a little prayer meeting we have begun to have together in one of the rooms. Already some of the Labour members have joined us, and several of the evangelical Tories. But all these things will improve, Vincent, if you persevere in your work at St. Silas'. Now the time has come for you to go outside this parish

more. I have been speaking to the Bishop of London, and he is quite willing for you to take a Mission next year somewhat on the lines of those conducted by the Community of the Kingdom of God."

"Am I not too young for such a venture?" said Vincent.

"God's grace is sufficient for you, Vinney. Now let us go to the House of Lords."

## CHAPTER VI

### A MISSION

No, when the fight begins within himself,  
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,  
Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—  
He's left himself, i' the middle, the soul wakes  
And grows. Prolong that battle through his life.

Its only way of spreading its own he-  
will, wherever it can get an entrance  
one by one, win the power to re-  
which strengthens it, and so the mal-

BROWNING  
ght is by creeping from will to  
each separate personality may,  
own character through Christ,  
as be permeated and purged.

H. S. HOLLAND

**I**T was no mock humility which made Vincent ask Lord Barton if he was not too young to conduct the London Mission. He was young in years and young in faith. He was twenty-six years old, and he had been converted only five years before. Nevertheless, like some prophet of old he felt a call from God to speak and act. It was not simply that he was persuaded by his friends, by Smilepeace or Father John or Barton to undertake new work. In the seclusion of his own thoughts, when he was making his morning meditation, there came to him again and again the voice that said, "Go unto this people." He could not have made a mistake. It came so often. It was, too, so difficult to obey sometimes, that he felt sure it was the Voice of the Crucified. At times it was a call to do some work which could bring no outward applause to him. It would not even win him the approval of his



friends, for they would be in ignorance of it, as when he went in obedience to his conscience to remonstrate with a leader among the advanced section of his own political party because of some grave wrong in his private life. No one of the outside world knew why that man retired from active politics for a time. Few knew that he was spending his time in penitence at Fenwick, having gone there at the advice of Vincent. Few, too, were aware of some great sacrifices of wealth that men and women in the highest and richest circles had made by the influence of Vincent. Any one who acted on his advice in such a matter did it anonymously. He had no hesitation in telling men who were making large sums of money in ways that were not compatible with a serious following of the Gospel to give up their business altogether, even if they were to starve by doing so.

There were other considerations that made Vincent hold back from conspicuous work such as a Mission until he was convinced that he ought to take it up. He had his own faults, which he knew more about than any one else. He liked applause when he got it. He liked to hear men speak of him as the "best parson in the Church of England," "the man who was not afraid to declare himself a Socialist." Like the great Lacordaire, he would go away after some great sermon or meeting and spend half an hour on his knees in front of a crucifix to save himself from the vanity that might dazzle his vision of God.

Again, it was a real trial to Vincent that so many of his friends and supporters misunderstood the full meaning of his message. To many it was still nothing more than a gospel of good works, of "practical" proposals, of novel economics. People failed to see that he was practical just because he was spiritual. They did not understand that he was bent on working a revolution, not by outward, visible law-making, but by inward, spiritual grace, by re-

pentance, by love of God and love of man. Because he supported some political proposal such as a new Housing Bill, men were inclined to think that he saw in that proposal all that was needed to solve the problem. But he knew that the Bill was but the outward temporary expression of a great moral and spiritual advance that was taking place in men's minds and consciences, and that it was with that that he as a priest was really concerned. He rejoiced over such a proposal because it indicated that men were progressing in love and unselfishness, in a sense of justice and consideration for one another.

"It is our business," he said, "to convert the landlords into loving their tenants more than rent, not to convert a slum-area into a fine street. It is our business to convince a professing Christian who sells adulterated food that he is breaking the sixth commandment, not to amend the Food and Drugs Act. We are more concerned about the soul of Dives than ~~we~~ are about the sores of Lazarus."

To most of his fellow Churchmen he was a mystery. He pleased everybody and nobody at one and the same time. The Evangelicals were delighted when they heard him preach the necessity of conversion, the love of Christ, the power of His all-atoning sacrifice, but they could not understand why he should worry people to do good works, still less why he should go to confession himself.

The Ritualists were glad to be able to claim so popular a preacher and so remarkable an ecclesiastic as one of themselves, but they were troubled because he would not belong to their societies, and could not go into ecstasies over the six points.

The Church dignitaries were thankful that in the Dis-establishment controversy Vincent and his friends Kesterton and Barton were on what they thought the right side, but they did not like their arguments, which seemed to indicate that the only objection to the disendowment

of deans and canons was that it would be difficult to accomplish such a revolution and would take people's attention off Socialism, which was more important. The "moderate" clergy also were willing to forgive Vincent much because his eccentricities were driving many of the more sober of the gentry into their hitherto empty churches. Prebendary Symper, of St. Richard's, Leveson Crescent, "grinning from whisker to whisker" (as Lady Spicebox put it), announced with great glee that his offertories had gone up 50 per cent since young Heathcote had upset the people at St. Silas' by his Socialistic nonsense.

The Broad Church clergy who considered themselves the intellectual section of the Church of England did not know what to make of Vincent. They could not say he was unlearned; they could not say that he was shutting his eyes to the results of scientific study and the advance of criticism. They could only take refuge in the remnants of the older political economy and appeal to the "common sense of the average Englishman," which they were sure in the long run would expose the futility of all Socialist schemes.

The Nonconformists admired Vincent. They were continually inviting him to their Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, and contrived to get big "meetings" in their chapels by the use of his name. He had a great respect for many individual Nonconformists whom he knew well, and he fully realised that they had done more for the cause of Christian social reform than Churchmen. But he also felt that they had done this rather in spite of their creed than because of it.

"They ought," he said, "to be individualists in religion, and we ought to be Socialists. It is the other way on in practice. They have a sense of corporateness which we with our belief in the great, spiritual, democratic, visible



Catholic Church eminently lack." Thus while he himself remained firm to the one Church, the ideal of which had been the means of bringing him to the faith from Secularism, he yet encouraged in every way the co-operation of Christians of all denominations in joint work as citizens and religious people. "This," he said, "is the way to bring about the reunion of Christendom. Christianity is Life and Love. We Christians must live and love together. Thus we shall come to know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

The assertion of the dogma of Apostolical Succession did not seem to him so effective a method of bringing Christians together as the assertion of the commandment to love one another. There could be no visible reunion until there was a desire for invisible unity of spirit. To Churchpeople he was continually teaching this, and pleading with them to be just towards Nonconformists, who, he felt sure, had suffered much from being misunderstood. When any measure affecting religion was proposed by the Tory Government on the advice of the bishops, he would always plead earnestly that the Nonconformist leaders should be consulted, as representing at least half the religion of England.

All this was to Vincent a part of the "revolution" which he verily believed God was working out in England. "When Christians can work together there will be no more cut-throat competition in the industrial sphere. Secularist Socialism too will disappear, for we shall have such a power in our hands that the 'world,' now represented by Individualist Competition on the one side and Socialist Secularism on the other, will be overcome. Our faith will overcome the world."

It must not be supposed that this great work which Vincent felt called to do was such a "one-man show" it sounds. The "Convincentisation of London,"

John, with his irrepressible love of jokes, called the great Mission, was a work in which many faithful men and women took part whose names did not appear in public, and of which even "Corrie" of *Chit-Chat* fame knew nothing. Of course there were Barton and Jack Kesterton, John Ball, Claude Smilepeace, and Lady Spicebox busily engaged all the time. The Community of the Kingdom of God sent six of their best men to assist, and for a fortnight before it began Vincent himself was in retreat at Fenwick praying for the Holy Spirit. Hundreds of the younger clergy and thousands of communicant men and women in various parts of the country were watching and pleading.

The Bishop of London spent the whole night in prayer with Vincent on the eve of the opening day.

"Remember, my son," he said, "that even our Lord did not accomplish His redeeming work by some great fiat thundered out of Heaven. He learned obedience and became obedient unto death. He withdrew Himself and prayed. Then He healed the multitude. Be humble; be patient; be faithful; pray. Go out trusting in the grace of God. I shall stay here and pray for you." Then kneeling down, Vincent received the blessing:

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His Face shine upon thee; the Lord lift up the Light of His countenance upon thee and give thee peace, wisdom, courage, strength, and love. Amen."

Like the Mission in Swampton, the London Mission lasted three months. As at Swampton, so in London it was conducted on somewhat unconventional lines. Vincent went round to various churches, staying for a week or so in each parish. The chief work was done in private by conversations or by letter. The younger Heathcote came to deserve the name of John Baptist more truly than his father, for like the great prophet he attracted to himself all

kinds of anxious inquirers of all classes who asked him "What must we do?" It was then that the study and meditation learnt at Fenwick bore good fruit.

Vincent and the six Brothers were occupied day and night in dealing with the difficulties of those who came to them. The victims of our modern competitive system came in crowds, asking piteously how they were to carry out their Christianity in shops and factories.

"My life," said one, "is a living lie; day by day I make false statements about goods in obedience to my employer."

Then an employer would come with the reverse side of the same plea. "Here am I making my money under a false system. How can I go on teaching in the Sunday School? How can I allow myself to represent 'the Church' as a churchwarden?"

Then a brewer would arrive: "What must I do? Your sermons have shown me that my trade as at present conducted is doing harm to the bodies and souls of thousands of my brothers and sisters. How can I say my prayers? Can I kneel down on a Saturday night and say, 'O God, prosper my business to-night in East London; let my houses be crowded with men and women drinking'? I have opposed all the Licensing Acts and all attempts at Temperance Reform. Yet I go every Sunday to church, and I am a communicant. I cannot go on as I am."

One night the chairman of the "World-Wide Clothing Company" visited Vincent.

"Your remarks on sweating," he said, "have interested me. I may say that you don't know all about the subject. You don't allow enough for the passion for cheap clothes which possesses the public. Nevertheless, what you have said shows me that our business is quite incompatible with an earnest following of Christ. I think there are some reforms which I could get introduced which would mitigate

a great deal of the 'sweating.' I shall see to this, but I never thought before I came to this Mission that religion had anything to do with the matter. I am supposed to have been converted at a Mission fourteen years ago. I am highly respected in the religious world. If I were to die to-night my funeral would be attended by all the leading Christian societies and a monument would be erected to me. Yet if what you say is true, I am little short of a murderer. In politics I have generally supported the present Government. I shall think twice before I do so again, not because I think them bad men, but because I think they tend to uphold the present system which I believe must go if we are to practise Christianity as a nation in the times that are coming. Do you want me to testify about my conversion? I hope not. I would rather keep quiet and pray. Will you pray for me?"

There was something splendidly manly and "English" about this confession, and Vincent thanked God. But he thanked God even more heartily for what followed on the last night of the Mission.

The dapper little figure of a journalist entered the inquiry room and asked for Mr. Heathcote. "I must see him quite alone, please, and I cannot give you my name." It was Spikes!

"Vinney," he said, "I can't hold out any longer." He burst into tears.

"Dear old chap," said Vincent; "come here and tell me all about it."

"There's nobody listening, is there?" he said. "I wouldn't do this for anybody but you, Vinney, but I've always loved you, as you know."

"We are quite alone," said the Missioner.

"I dare say you think," he said, "that I am going to talk about Socialism and Secularism, and how I think that Christianity will win the day. I do believe that now, but

it's not what is uppermost in my mind. It's my own sins I see, and what a humbug I am. It's your sermon on the Prodigal Son which has turned me inside out." He wept again. There was a silence, broken only by the sobs of poor Spikes and the whispered prayers of Vincent.

At last he recovered himself and went on:

"It's this way. Here have I been writing in the *Vox* for years and years about the wickedness of other people, and I'm a darned sight wickeder than any of them. I've abused the rich people for being selfish, and I'm the most selfish beggar on earth. I've talked about brotherhood, and I haven't spoken to my own sister for ten years because she got a hundred pounds out of my father's will and I got nothing. I've called the landlords covetous, and I'm always asking the *Vox* people to give me more for my articles. I'm a deceiver, because I have pretended to believe I hadn't got a free will when I knew I had. I'm a liar because I have written things in *Vox* which I didn't think were true. Oh, Vinney, if you can save me from all this by your religion and your Church, save me, do!"

"Christ will save you," said Vincent; "the tender, strong, powerful Christ, the Healer of those in distress of soul, of which you are one."

"Vinney, I have been wanting to see you a long time, but I could not bring myself to come. I have been here every night. I have heard every word you have uttered in the Mission. It has been a revelation to me. You know I always wanted the *Vox* to give up Secularism, but it was only because I thought it bad policy; now I understand it's a lie."

"But," said Vincent, "you have found that out through the struggles of your own individual soul. That's the right way. How wonderful the Lord is! Now tell me, Spikes, how is my father? Has he got rid of that cough?"

"No, Vinney; he never will. Look here, if you think an atheist goes to hell if he dies unconverted, I advise you to see your father."

"Has he been to the Mission?"

"Yes, he came one night with me. He's proud of you, Vinney. He cannot help it. It did him good to see the crowd in church, who had all come to hear his little Vincent. He was rather silent and glum as we walked back after church. I believe when he got home he tore up another article on 'A Bogy Revival.' He's always tearing them up now. He seems restless."

"Dear father! I'll go and see him to-night."

"It's half-past eleven," said Spikes, "and rather late. Hadn't you better wait till morning?"

"He's my father," said Vincent.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN EXTREMIS

Death has dropped a curtain of mystery between us and those we love. No theologian knows, nor ever did know, what is hidden behind that veil. Let us then do our duty here, try to be happy here, try to make others happy here, and when the curtain lifts for us—we shall see.

ROBERT BLATCHFORD

Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an Apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles.—PAUL

"**W**AS that Spikes with you?" said Lord Barton to Vincent as they left the church together. "Surely he's not converted, is he?"

"Praise the Lord, he is," said Vincent. "But you must not ask questions, Barty; our conversation was sacred."

"We have indeed much to be thankful for," said Barton. "Think what it means. There hasn't been a more far-reaching conversion since your own."

"Yes, it means a great deal—to him," said Vincent, "and, of course, to the Church at large. *Vox* is still such an enormous power, isn't it?"

"And Spikes has nearly taken your father's place in it. Your father seems to have lost his cunning."

"Poor dear father's very ill, and I must go and see him to-night."

"You don't say so!" said Barton. "I had not heard."

"Nor had I till Spikes told me. I am going down to Walthamstow at once. Will you wait for me to ~~wait~~ <sup>meet</sup> me to Timespool Street?"

"No, but I'll call a cab. You're not in a fit state to walk after your work. We shall be having you ill next. Come along."

They stepped into a hansom.

"What little outward impression a Mission makes on London!" said Vincent, as he watched the crowd in the street. "Who would think that in that little church to-night the Power of the Divine Being has been striving with souls? Here all seems as usual as we rush along. People are coming out of the theatres and pushing their way into the cafés. Foul plots are being hatched. Dukery Square is just beginning to wend its way to balls and receptions. Parliament is still sitting. Father John's dockers are turning out of the blazing pubs and turning into the doss-houses. Unless Jack happens to be speaking in the Commons at this moment, God doesn't seem to be moving in all this."

"It was ever thus," said Barton. "Don't you remember Christmas Eve in the Commercial Road? And have you forgotten Bethlehem? Or, think of our Lord as He spoke the Sermon on the Mount? His congregation was probably smaller than yours of to-night."

"You are right, Barty, you always are."

God's in His Heaven—  
All's right with the world."

There was silence in the cab.

"What are you thinking now?" said Barton after a time.

"Of my father," said Vincent. "Will you pray for me during our interview? Do you know, Barty, I am positively too tired to pray. That's a confession, isn't it, when I have so often told people in my sermons that they ought never to be so. 'Men ought always to pray and not to faint.' I feel more like fainting just at present."



"Dear old chap, yes, I'll pray. But do you think you must go to-night? Can't you sleep at the hotel and go down early to-morrow morning?"

"Look at those people coming out of that restaurant," said Vincent, not noticing what his companion said. "I should not be surprised to know that they are professing Christians; but do you think that they are nearer God than my father, the Secularist?"

"I won't judge them," said Barton, "but I am quite sure your father's nearer to God than the world thinks."

"He would never call himself an Atheist, you know," said Vincent. "It was always 'Secularist' or 'Agnostic.' That makes a great difference, doesn't it? Why, I'm a Secularist, and so are you. We both believe we must try to make this world a better place. So did my father. And I'm sure I'm an Agnostic. I don't know. You don't know."

"I would even say," said Barton, "that your father believes in Christ, though he doesn't know Him as you and I do yet. He believes in the Truth, and Christ is the Truth. 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' 'I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me.' He believes in Love, and God is Love. Somewhere he will find Him."

"Thank you, my dearest Barty. You have said what I am too tired to think or say."

"Here's your ticket, Vinney."

"What, first-class? No, Barty, I can't."

"Yes, I insist! Good night."

He changed into a third at Bishopsgate.

Wedge in between a watercress-seller and a sempstress with a gigantic parcel of shirts in her lap, he had time to open and read a letter that had been sent round to him in the inquiry room after that night's service.

It was written on several sheets of deep black-edged paper, and read as follows:—

"MY DEAR MR. HEATHCOTE,

"You will remember me best under my girl's name of Cissy Market Hatcham. I married Cornelius Vander-trust, and this letter is to tell you that he was seized with heart failure this morning and died in a few hours. I know you believe in prayers for the dead. Please pray for him and for me. I am in very great trouble, and it will ease me if I may write it down for you to read. You will of course respect the sacredness of what I say.

"I am a believer in a kind of spiritualism, having had all kinds of experience since I was a child of five. I scarcely ever talk to others of this, but since I met you at Alabaster Court that Christmas-time, I have always felt that you would help me if ever I needed your assistance. I did not talk much to you then, because I did not quite like you at first. You seemed too good for me, and I was feeling very worldly just then. I wanted Cornelius to propose to me, not because I loved him, but because I wanted to make what the world calls a good match. I did not like what you said about adulterated food, because I thought you referred to Cornelius and his trade. I suppose it was my conscience.

"Well, I married him, and I have never been happy since. He was never unkind to me, but we just did not love one another. It was all hard and cold, and if it had not been for my spiritual experiences I should have gone mad. Then we settled down in London not far from Dukery Square, and I heard people talking about you and your wonderful sermons. For a long time I would not go, because I was afraid you would make me think that we were living on money we ought not to have. Besides, I did not care for church. Its ceremonies mean nothing to me. It does not help me to get nearer God. I do believe in God, and I do pray. I pray more now than ever I did when I went to church.

"Then at last I was moved to go and hear you. You will perhaps not believe it when I tell you that a strange sensation came over me when I first heard you which has never quite left me. I felt that at last God had revealed Himself to me and that you were a messenger from the spirit-world to tell me what life really meant. You will wonder why I have never written to you before. I am naturally shy, and besides my husband would not have liked it. He too had a kind of fear of you and your friend, Mr. Kesterton, whom he opposed in the election.

"That reminds me of another time when this strange feeling came over me. I was on the platform the night the poll was declared. There was something spiritual at work that night in the midst of all the tumult. I asked myself what it all meant, and why the people seemed to have such a love for Mr. Kesterton and all of you, while my husband was obviously the subject of a deep-felt scorn. It could not only be politics. Was God at work in an election? I could not answer this, but I felt He was. Then the Doxology sounded so strange at such a time. Yet I did not think it wrong. I found myself singing it even though it was an act of praise to God for defeating my own husband! And now I have been to the Mission several times, and I have learnt so much I did not know before.

"I think I would like to go to church now—at least, your church. I have been trying to carry out your teaching by myself in my own way. I have left off sending money to the poor, and I have got to know them myself. I have tried to look after my own household in a way I never did before. I am trying to love people. Do you know, it has made me a new creature! I was going to write to you to-day even if my husband had not died. Now he is dead. How solemn it is. I am writing in the room where his body lies. If what you have said about his trade is true, and I suppose God told you to say it, then at least he can sin no more.

"Poor Cornelius! Is he not one of those for whom Christ prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'? But what ought I to do with my money? Is it cursed money? Oh, Mr. Heathcote, these are hard questions. Will you write me the answer? Don't come and see me yet. I cannot bear it.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CISSY VANDERTRUST."

"Poor child!" said Vincent. "What a world this is! Had I known all that this Mission would bring upon me I should hardly have dared to take it. And now for my father."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Barnes, as she let him in at the door. "Why, bless me, if it isn't my darling Vinney, and at this time of night, too!"

"How is father?" said Vincent.

"His cough's very troublesome. I should not be surprised if he didn't live till morning."

"But why, dear Kitty, did you not send for me before?"

"Well, it's like this. Father said that you were very busy up in London, and you were not to be sent for. Besides, the doctor did not wish him disturbed. Even Spikes ain't been admitted lately. But, bless me, father's a fine fellow. He's been writing for the *Vox* up to the last. I sent off his article to-day for next week's number. It's called 'One Step Enough for Me.' It's the best he's written for some time."

"What's it about?" said Vincent.

"Well, you don't expect old Kitty to remember much of it, do you? It's about this world, and how he'll die content if he's made it a little better than he found it. By the way, the parson called this afternoon, but he wouldn't see him. No parsons for John Baptist Heathcote!"

"I'm a parson," said Vincent.

"Yes, but you're his son—that's different. Bless me, Vinney, you look tired. I'll be bound you ain't had any supper. There's a bit of cold mutton in the larder. Let me get it for you, and then when you have had it you can go and see father."

"No, Kitty, thank you all the same. I must see him now."

Vincent went upstairs. There lay John Baptist Heathcote, editor of *Vox Populi*, chairman of the National Secularist Socialist League—dying.

"I heard your voice, Vinney. I suppose you've come to tell me I'm going to hell. Well, if I go I shall meet some of your friends there, and we shall be able to talk about you. Aye, and there'll be some fine fellows there, won't there? Galileo and Bruno and Savonarola and Mill and Bradlaugh—all the men who've been damned by popes and priests. Hang this cough!"

"Dear old dad," said Vincent, "why did you not tell me you were ill? I should have been here before."

"I thought you were too busy converting the capitalists to 'Kingdom come,'" said his father, with a chuckle which again brought on the cough. "Who told you I was ill?"

"Spikes told me."

"Poor little Spikes! Has he been to the Mission again? Is he converted? Shouldn't be surprised. He's never been the same since you went over to the enemy."

"Don't call it the enemy, father. Even if you must go on with your view of life to the end, why not at least think us Christians friends? Say 'friends,' not 'enemy.'"

"It's too late, Vinney. I have done my little bit of work, and now I'm off. You think I've done harm in the world. Maybe I have, but I think I've done a little good too. I produced you, Vinney. That's something."

"Dearest dad, I thank my God day by day for all He



has given me through you. I love mankind because you taught me to do so, and I have your generous blood in my veins."

"Yes," said the dying man. "I taught you to love them and I love them all myself. Poor fellows, I wish I could do more for them. By the way, Vinney, I've made no will. I don't believe in such things. It'll all go to you what's left of it and poor old Kitty. Give it to the poor, the hungry, the unemployed, the kids. I shan't be able to do much more for them now. I'd like them to think of John Baptist Heathcote sometimes."

"'Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, My brethren, ye did it unto Me,'" said Vincent softly.

There was a long pause. Heathcote seemed to sleep. Overcome with fatigue, Vincent slept too in the chair.

"Bless 'em both," said Kitty, as she contemplated her two precious "boys," as she still called them.

"I wonder if they've quarrelled. Of course, Baptist can't abide a parson, I know; but then Vinney ain't a regular parson. Now I say as religion's all very well, but it ought to be forgotten and bygones be bygones when we're a-dying. Baptist's as good a Christian as I've met. He wouldn't hurt a fly on the window-pane, and as for them as are in need, why his whole life's been given up to 'em. He wouldn't be dying now if it hadn't been for the *Vox*. The *Vox* has killed him. And . . . the loss of Vinney. Oh, Vinney, why did you become a parson? You've killed your father, that's what you've done."

"I'm not dead yet, Kitty," said Heathcote faintly, turning in the bed. "Why do you say Vinney's killed me? Christians are not as bad as that. Did you think he'd poisoned me?"

"Hush, Baptist," said Mrs. Barnes, "don't exert yourself. Here, take a little brandy."

"Vinney's a good man . . . where is he? Ah, there he

is, preaching . . . my word, he's a fine talker . . . what a crowd to hear my boy . . . bless him. . . ."

Vincent awoke and was at his father's side again in a moment to hold his hand.

"Bless him . . . ah, he's a good Socialist still . . . that's my old Vinney. . . . Listen to him. . . . Heaven on the earth. . . . Yes, that's it . . . that's it. . . . Hell in the slums . . . yes. . . . Heaven now . . . good men . . . good women . . . justice . . . love . . . little children . . . hungry . . . sad . . . yes, that's my Vinney . . . my darling boy. . . . Inasmuch as . . . yes, I know it . . . I said it once in the . . . Park. . . . Inasmuch as . . ."

"'Ye did it unto Me,'" said Vincent, as he kissed the dear, dead face.

## CHAPTER VIII

### NEWS FROM LONDON

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, buying up the opportunity.  
COL. IV. 5 (Margin)

If it is limited to the wage-earners, Socialism cannot conquer. If it includes all the workers and the moral and intellectual élite of the nation, its victory is certain.—LIEBKNECHT

IT was "recreation" time again at Fenwick. The Brothers were walking about in couples in their delightful garden, drinking in the fresh air as it came rolling in great warm gusts from the blue mountains and the far-off lakes.

"You deserve a rest, Vinney," said the Superior. "What a gorgeous time you've had, only shadowed by that sad night you have told me of."

"Yet it was not so very sad, was it?" said Vincent. "How the angels must have made merry that night over all those conversions. And even my dear father's death-bed had its compensations."

"It's a profound mystery," said the Superior. "It only shows us how little we pigmies know on this tiny speck of a planet."

"Yes," said Vincent. "I am learning to distrust these penny books which profess to tell you everything in one hundred and forty-four questions and answers."

"We've just published another," said the Superior, laughing.



"I know," said Vincent; "I've read it, but it does not profess to tell you everything. How glorious this air is! I believe the dad might have lived in this air if we could have got him away from Walthamstow."

"We invited him here once, unbeknown to you, but he would not come."

"Did you?" said Vincent. "I expect he was afraid of monks, though he had a liking for St. Francis. I read him the story of 'True Joy' once, and he was mighty pleased. He liked the 'Wolf of Gubbio' too. He thought the Wolf must have been a capitalist."

"Tamed by Christianity?" said the Superior.

"Yes. I never thought of that. How stupid of me! By the way, when is Spikes coming for his retreat? How funny it sounds! Spikes in retreat! You must be merciful, Superior. He probably thinks you keep a dungeon for reclaimed journalists."

"It wouldn't be a bad thing for some of them, especially before they were reclaimed."

"For Lord Haypence, for example?"

"Yes, or the editor of the *Times* before a Tory victory in the Commons."

"Or Lady Loafer on Saturday night before visiting St. Clara's. But, seriously, when is Spikes due?"

"He ought to be here by now. There he is, coming up the road."

"Let's go and meet him; he may be shy if we flood him with 'Brothers' *en masse*."

But Spikes was not in a shy mood to-day. He was bubbling over with some news he had to tell, and when they got him into the ante-room he plunged *in medias res*.

"Vinney," he said, "I have come to tell you the result of the meeting of the staff of *Vox*. We met yesterday at Yeast Lodge, which, I am glad to hear, you to Kitty for her life. She wants the staff to gr

its meetings there, and she promises a duck and green peas whenever they are in season. Well, I must tell you that we met to talk over the future of *Vox*. The circulation is still over 100,000, and is going up. It would be madness to let it drop. But who's to be editor?"

"You, of course," said Vincent, "when you've finished your retreat. Sugarstick can keep it going meanwhile."

"Not a bit of it," said Spikes. "I made them a speech. I threatened to secede if they did not make the League cut out the word 'Secularist' from the title, or refuse to record its doings any more. They said they would do what they could. Then I told them that it was certain that all over the country now there is a feeling that Socialism, if it is to succeed, must at least not be anti-Christian. I told them in passing that I had done with atheism, at which they did not seem surprised. Then came my *coup d'état*. 'Gentlemen,' I said, 'there is but one name associated with *Vox Populi* and its editorship which can carry us to victory. That name is Heathcote. There is but one man who can step into the late editor's shoes with any chance of maintaining the paper's popularity. Fortunately, his name is the same as that of our late chief. Gentlemen, I nominate and I shall vote for Vincent Heathcote.'"

"You silly old boy," said Vincent. "Of course they rejected your proposal. Did you even find a seconder?"

"Indeed I did," said Spikes. "The 'Morning Star' rose to the occasion or the bait or whatever you like to call it, and said, 'My friends, Spikes is right. Don't be alarmed, comrades, I'm not a Christian; but I believe in Vincent Heathcote. It's a short creed, but it's good business. Why, the whole of London's talking about him.'"

"Will he drop the 'Reverend'?" said Sugarstick. '*Vox* can't stand that.'

"'Bosh!' said L. 'It's as good as "Sugarstick".' That was a foolish remark on my part, and he wouldn't vote in consequence.

"Then we went on discussing pros and cons for an hour and a half. I promised you would not turn *Vox* into a religious newspaper, at least, I said you wouldn't advertise curates and their views or vicarages to let. I even said you wouldn't inform your readers when the Archbishop of Canterbury went to Brighton, or that the deacon's wife at Ebenezer Chapel had been delivered of twins. Was I right?"

"Spikes, you really are a caution," laughed Vincent. "I suppose you wouldn't mind my telling them when Bunks has got the gout?"

"Or that Lady Warwick has sold her coronet for the cause?" said the Superior.

"Oh, there's no religion in that," laughed Spikes.

"Isn't there?" said Vincent. "But larks apart, Spikes, how did the voting go?"

"*Nem. con.* for you. Sugarstick grunted and didn't vote. So, Mr. Vincent Heathcote, I salute you as the new editor of *Vox Populi*."

"Superior, what shall I do?"

"We must talk it over in chapter to-night," he replied. "It's a startling proposition. I think Mr. Sp——, I beg your pardon, what is your real name?"

"Rednal," said Spikes, "but you had better call me Spikes."

"I think, Mr. Rednal, we had better fix this up before you go into retreat."

"I dare not decide without consulting Jack and Barty," said Vincent, "and I think I ought to ask the Bishop of London."

"You had better go to town to-morrow morning," said the Superior.

. . . . .

Yet another meeting was held before the final decision was agreed upon. This time it was at St. Martin's Mission, where our old friends assembled within twenty-four hours of the receipt of a letter from Vincent to Father John.

"Which as how the Father did seem that excited when he got his letters that morning," said Mrs. Buttles, "as mine were pleased when 'e got a five-pun note from the post-orfice once as were lyin' there for 'im as he didn' know it as were sent 'im from 'is old aunt in Orstralia as liked 'im when 'e were a kid, which as 'ow he bought me a new pair o' 'lastics an' a shawl as were like what Queen Wictoria gave Squires' daughter when 'er got married as got divorced afore the year were out."

Lady Spicebox flew down in a cab, leaving Sir Joscelyn to have his dinner alone, and eating potted meat sandwiches all the way. Kesterton paired with the Under Secretary for War, and Barton put off his engagements for the evening, calling for Mr. Smilepeace at St. Silas' Vicarage at Vincent's request received by telegram.

Vincent arrived latest of them all, having called at Fulham Palace immediately on his arrival.

"What did the Bishop say?" asked Smilepeace.

"He leaves it in your hands," said Vincent. "He was very kind, and if you will allow it he will make no objection. He asks me to take pity on the bishops and treat them fairly. I promised I would."

"It will be the first time," said Barton, "that *Vox* has done so."

"Perhaps so," said Vincent; "but it will also be the first time the editor has known what a bishop is."

"Now, Lady Spy, you must take the chair this evening," said Father John.

"Oh, no," said Lady Spicebox, "the editor of *Vox*, of course, must do that!"

"How like a woman!" said Lord Barton; "the meeting

is called to decide who is to be the editor of *Vox*. How can Vincent take the chair?"

"How like a man!" retorted Lady Spy. "This meeting is not to do anything of the kind. The staff has already decided who is to be the editor of *Vox*, and we have got nothing to do with it except to say if Vincent may accept the office."

"Quite right, my lady," said Father John. "You are evidently made for the chair, so take it."

"Wait a minute, my lady," said Mrs. Buttles, running in, "which as how the accylites 'as left their strawberry stalks on that chair, which as they've stuck a pin there afore now when Farver's a-sittin' down, which as how they'd been to Drory Lane an' seen the clown do it as the pantyloon a-hollered as frightened Mrs. Brown's baby in the pit as 'ad convulsions as Mother Seegel's Syrup's all very well if you've got it, which as 'ow you can't expect to mind it a-goin' to a theater."

"Look here, Father John," said Kesterton, when Mrs. Buttles had gone out, "if that old lady's to be one of my constituents when we've got the women the vote, I shall really have to withdraw my support from the movement."

"No, you won't, Jack," said Lady Spicebox, "she'd make a splendid 'suffragette.' No Cabinet Minister could resist her!"

"Which as how a man's all very well in Parliament," said Father John, "but a woman 'ud be better as can talk nineteen to the dozen as my gran'muvver 'ud talk my gran'farver into the middle o' nex' week as 'e died forty year ago come Mìchaelmas as 'is buried in Snoreham churchyard as 'ad a 'erse o' four horses as were two more than Squire's."

"My dear Father," said the chairwoman, "if you don't stop we shall die of laughing and never get to business. Now order, please! The question before the House is



this: Shall the Reverend Mr. Heathcote accept the offer made him of the editorship of the *Vox Populi*? What do you say, Lord Barton?"

"I say yes."

"What are your reasons?" said the chairwoman.

"I reserve my reasons till the others have spoken, and if I agree with them I shall not give any."

"Mr. Kesterton, M.P. for this borough, will now address the House," said Lady Spicebox.

"I have thought it over very seriously," said Jack, "more seriously than I could have done in this comic household known as a Vicarage, and I have come to the same conclusion as Lord Barton."

"Have you any reasons?"

"Yes, numerous," said Jack; "but I need not trouble the meeting with them, seeing that we have all made up our minds."

"Wait a bit," said the chairwoman. "I want to speak. Gentlemen, I also have thought it over, and I think it will be just delightful and all that, you know. I think Vincent—I mean Mr. Heathcote—will be the right man in the right place and all that. Those are my reasons, and I give them to you. Now, Mr. Smilepeace, let's hear what you think."

"After all," said Vincent, "my good vicar has more right than any of us to be heard on the subject. I would like to know from him whether, if I accept the editorship, he will allow me to stay on at St. Silas'."

Claude Smilepeace paused before answering.

He owed much to Vincent, but on the other hand Vincent owed much to him. St. Silas' Church had, indeed, become a centre of interest in West London through the young curate's personality. On the other hand many of the old congregation had seceded for the same cause. Would the present congregation stand much more eccen-

tricity? An editor-curate! Editor of the most notorious Socialist paper in the country, and one which until the last week had been supposed to be Secularist into the bargain!

Again, could Vincent really attend to both these sets of duties? To balance these considerations there was the great outstanding fact that Vincent was the leader of a movement rapidly taking shape as the most important movement in Church and State that had been known since the time of the Tractarians. If he left St. Silas' he would have to find another centre from which to work. Moreover, Smilepeace himself had thrown himself into the movement, and had no intention of leaving it. He felt as he sat at the table that he was really one of the St. Martin's Mission set. To turn off Vincent would be his loss, and nobody else's.

Finally he gave his adhesion to the proposal, and cheerfully consented to retain Vincent as his curate.

Vincent thanked him. "I owe everything to you, Vicar. You have been an example to me of unselfishness and humility, which is as rare as it is beautiful and Christlike. My friends, I shall write to-night to the secretary, accepting the editorship of *Vox*, and I hereby elect you all to serve me on the staff."

"What, me too?" said Lady Spicebox.

"Most decidedly," said Vincent.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

There are some people whom I must startle, if I am to do any good. But to startle the majority of good and sensible men, or to startle, so as to disgust at once a majority of any sort, are things which I most earnestly should wish to avoid.—DR. ARNOLD

"BLESS me, it's quite like old times to have you here again, my Vinney," said Kitty Barnes as she bustled about to get the dinner ready. "Though I don't like that collar of yours. Why don't you wear a white choker, as your friend Charles Kingsley did?"

"For much the same reason, Aunt Kittens, that you don't wear a crinoline. Times have changed. *Cucullus non facit monachum*, which, being interpreted into plain English, means 'It isn't the collar as makes the Anglican parson.' But, Aunt Kittens, what are you going to do all by yourself in this house? We shall not be here very often now. It is too far for me to come from London more than once a week."

"Well, if you'll consent, Vinney, Spikes and his wife would like to live here as my lodgers."

"That's an excellent arrangement," said Vincent, "and I'd like to see it carried out. I've never seen Mrs. Rednal, and shall be glad to make her acquaintance. By the way, Aunt Kittens, you know that Spikes is a Christian now."

"Yes, my dear, I saw him saying his prayers one morning. But I say as Spikes has been a Christian all along. He never did no harm to any one."



"You talk as if a Christian was a sort of good, beneficent dog, and Christianity like mild Lager beer, Aunt Kittens. I wish you would read the New Testament and find out more about us."

"There, Vinney, leave me alone. Are you any better for being a Christian? No. Aren't you just my darling boy as you always were long afore you wore that collar? Wouldn't you have given the shirt off your back to a starving man just as much in the old days as you would now?"

Vincent felt himself nonplussed. Somehow the Fenwick teaching had left out the question of how to deal with a good old pagan lady who had never seen a self-examination book."

"I believe," he said to himself, "the only way to make Aunt Kittens a Catholic is to get her to meet Mrs. Buttles. I'll try it anyhow."

"Aunt Kittens," he said, "will you come down to Limehouse some day to see an old lady of my acquaintance? She would like to know you."

"Bless you, Vinney; I don't go out to no tea-parties, and I've heard that your acquaintances are mostly rich folk as Osmund and I never got on well with."

"Oh, no, she's quite poor and such a chatty old girl. She never stops talking."

"Well, I make no promises, but I'll see about it. Now here's the staff a-coming and the taters are not done."

Once more the staff assembled round the table at Yeast Lodge. Over the mantelpiece hung a portrait of John Baptist Heathcote which seemed to smile at them a little contemptuously, as much as to say, "How will you manage without me, I'd like to know?" It was a strange sight. Scarlet ties and brown suits for the most part, and one figure in black at the head of the table.

"I am going to read to you, gentlemen," said Vincent, "the introductory article I have written for next Friday's *Vox*. I shall be glad to hear your criticisms when I have finished."

Sugarstick took out his book and pencil with which to make notes. He was still a little suspicious of the new editor; but he knew he was in a minority, and it would not do to run the risk of getting the sack.

Vincent read as follows:—

"Title of the article:—

'OUR AIMS AND HOPES'

BY

THE EDITOR

"Comrades, Readers of *Vox*,

"I have been asked by our old friends, the staff, to become the editor in the place of your good friend, my father, who has died. It is a difficult place to fill. For many years, week by week, you have read his message to yourselves and to the people of England.

"What was his aim? It was to make England a happier place to live in, to enable the English people to possess and enjoy their own country and the fruits of their own labour. My aim is the same as his. It will always be the aim of the writers and readers of *Vox* so long as I am editor. Politically we are Socialists. We see in Socialism the vision of a state in which it will be possible for the wealth of the country to be more equitably shared by all who labour justly to produce it. Under the present system this is not the case, it cannot be the case.

"'Wealth,' as Ruskin says, 'consists of the good and therefore useful things in the possession of the nation.'

"If this be so, there is little wealth in England, for most good things are not in the possession of the nation.

"To quote the same prophet. 'The fruit of all inquiries

respecting the wealth of any nation is not, how much it has ; but whether it is in a form that can be used, and in the possession of persons who can use it.'

"I ask you, comrades, is all or even a quarter of the wealth of England 'in a form that can be used,' or 'in the possession of persons who can use it'?

"Leaving out the land, the minerals, etc., are education, leisure, pictures, books at the disposal of the nation, so that the people can have them, use them, enjoy them? No. The homes of the masses, the hours of labour, the schools system, the methods of trade are such that while multitudes are occupied in producing the good things, only a tiny minority have the opportunity or the power to use them.

"I say, politically we are Socialists. But can reform and revolution (for it is nothing less) come about by political means only?

"To this *Vox* has always answered *No*.

"*Vox* has always understood, and has therefore always taught, that men must be persuaded in their minds that a change is right and good before they will consent to make it. Socialism cannot be forced. The whole nation must be led on gradually to perceive that it is desirable.

"Now, how is this to be done? Here I touch a point at which you, my comrades, will consider that I am departing from the policy of the late editor, and you will be right. He held that 'education,' by which he meant instruction, was enough in order to effect the change.

"'Teach people,' I am quoting from an old article of his, 'teach people, teach people. Show them that as two and two make four, so competition leads to slavery, and they will immediately embrace Socialism.'

"But, my comrades, do people immediately that they are taught that a practice is bad give it up and take a new one? I have not found it so.

"Teach people that betting and gambling lead in nine cases out of ten to ruin. Do they at once give them up?"

"Teach a working man that buying cheap boots for his children encourages sweating, and that they soon wear out. Does he give up the practice?"

"Teach the landlord that keeping his slum dwellings standing, out of which he is making a large profit in rent, is rearing a race of stunted mortals and killing little children three months old. Does he at once pull them down and build good houses and perhaps take less rent?"

"No. Instruction by itself is inadequate. We have to get to the root of the matter, which is a moral one. Men are selfish and covetous. Rich and poor, all classes are guilty.

"What shall we do? Shall we punish them? Certainly not. We will help them to be unselfish and to seek each the other's good. This must be done all round. We want unselfish legislators, unselfish administrators, both Parliamentary and municipal. We want unselfish trade unionists, men who will not despise the unskilled labourer or the unemployed who have not been so fortunate as they.

"Again, we must get people to take a new view of 'property.' If all property is to belong in the future to the community, then the individuals who at present form the community, and hold property in a totally different way, have got to be persuaded that the new way of holding it is the best. That means more unselfishness.

"Dare I say, my comrades, what is in my mind as a Christian? Why not? It is this. No great national or social change has ever been brought about in any civilised country except by men and women impelled by moral and religious forces.

"Christianity in days gone by put before Europe a new ideal of life and prevailed upon Europe to accept it.

"Christian nations have failed in social reform only

when they have departed from that ideal. Socialism, morally speaking, puts before us the same ideal of life as Christianity, namely brotherhood.

"This ideal has to be put before us afresh in this twentieth century, not because Christianity has failed, but because the nations have departed from it.

"So far as *Vox Populi* has tried to persuade you in the past that this is not so and that Christianity itself must be abolished if Socialism is to come I say that *Vox Populi* has been wrong. It will not so try to persuade you again.

"Nor do I anticipate, comrades, that the English people who read our newspaper will dissent from this. They are a religious people. If they have neglected Christian practice it has been because Christians have shown them a bad example of what Christianity is. Let all the masses of professing Christians begin once more to practise their religion and Socialism will come, for then as in the old days we shall be of one heart and soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace and faith and righteousness.

"VINCENT HEATHCOTE."

"It's splendid," said Spikes.

"I shall resign," said Sugarstick.

But he didn't, all the same.

## CHAPTER X

### A GARDEN CITY

This very earth, now outraged by wars and clouded with armaments, might be an earth of peace and goodwill. These cities of England, that now sprawl like rubbish heaps, might really be human homes, light and bright and sound and loveable. This British Commerce might be a network of intelligent co-operation instead of a savage strife of competitive interests. Trade might be open and honest and human-hearted. Wealth might be tempered, thoughtful, widespread, and sacrificial. The nation might be of one heart and one mind. And all men and women might feel themselves free in a free land which was their own.—H. S. HOLLAND

THE platform of Victoria Station was crowded one summer afternoon with our own special *Dramatis Personæ* and their friends bound for Bartonville, the delightful "Garden City" which was gradually coming into being in a sweet Surrey village under the direction of Lord Barton. Thither he had invited Father John, Kesterton, Vincent, Sir Joscelyn and his lady, the *Vox* writers, Claude Smilepeace, and even Kitty Barnes and Mrs. Buttles.

Sir Joscelyn was specially interested in the cheap and pretty cottages which Lord Barton had caused to be erected.

"There can never be any slums here," he said, "even though we are close to London, and even if Socialism never comes. Here are wide streets and large gardens and beautiful little dwelling places."

"How can you afford to do it?" said Sir Joscelyn.

"I can only do it by being content to make fifty per cent



less in ground rents than my father received for the older part of Bartonville. But in the end even this will pay from what is called a business point of view. Not that I care for that. The real profit will be for the nation, in the fact that our death rate is low, our infant mortality is almost nil, and our young men and young women are strong and healthy. We can beat any of the suburban clubs at cricket, football, and hockey. That's 'wealth,' Sir Joscelyn."

"How interesting!" said Lady Spicebox. "I told you, Jossy, you'd come to Socialism in the end."

"But this is not Socialism," said Sir Joscelyn.

"It is preparing the way for it," replied Lord Barton. "We are getting people used to the communal life. When it is all in working order, I shall hand it over to the municipal authorities. But it is not ready for them yet nor are they ready for it."

"What do you mean by the 'communal life'?" asked Sir Joscelyn.

"I mean the sharing by all classes of their interests and ideas by living together in an English town in something of the same way as people live in some of the little villages on the Continent."

"But these people are all of one class, are they not?"

"On the contrary, though their houses look of much the same size there are all kinds of inhabitants. We have agricultural labourers who work on the farms, but we have also clerks who run into the City by the tram every day. We have artists, authors, journalists, in fact, all kinds."

"Except the Dukery Square lot?" said Lady Spy, laughing.

"We have one of them," said Lord Barton. "Mrs. Vandertrust has lived here since her husband's death, and a most valuable acquisition she has been to us."

"I suppose he left a mine of shekels, eh?" said Sir Joscelyn.

"I did not mean that," said Barton. "Mrs. Vandertrust is loved by all who know her here. She sheds a brightness wherever she goes; the children love her; and she is always gathering the people together for games and parties. She is my best ally in giving the communal tone to the place."

"What's that building over there?" said Sir Joscelyn. "It's the best proportioned of all of them, except perhaps the church."

"Oh, that's our little theatre and concert hall," said Lord Barton. "That reminds me, we have yet another West-Ender coming down. Poppy Oliphant has undertaken to manage our dramatic and musical department."

"Excuse me," said Sir Joscelyn, "for asking again a horridly British question. How do you make it all pay?"

"Look round you," said Barton, "and you will see where the wealth comes from. These are our factories, though they look prettier than most. Before I started this place I got half a dozen picked firms to move their work down here. This, as you know, was our family estate and was chiefly occupied by a perfectly useless park."

"My friends said to me, 'How nice it will be for you to have this beautiful place to return to when you are fagged out by your duties in the House of Lords!' How comic one's friends are without meaning to be! Even now when I do attend the House of Lords regularly during session I spend less than two hundred hours there in five months. Fagged out, indeed! Then they told me I could have garden parties, and after the season was over might allow some Sunday-schools to have tea in a corner of the park sufficiently far away not to come between the wind and my nobility."

"I determined to strike out a new line altogether. I



made the house into a convalescent home with the garden attached. Then I laid hands on the park. I sought out the firms I have mentioned and persuaded them to come here. They have never regretted it. There's a peculiar Bartonville swing and energy among our workers here which is well known and envied by all who are watching us. Then there are the farms. They keep the place countrified. It is a curious mixture of rural and urban life. The farm labourers are sharpened up by their contact with the townsmen, yet they are so fond of the country that they never want to go to London. The townsmen, on the other hand, have lost their cockneyisms and much prefer looking after their gardens to running back to London in the evening to some stifling music-hall. Besides, under Poppy Oliphant's direction, we shall soon have all we want in that way on the spot."

"You said just now," remarked Sir Joscelyn, "that eventually you would hand it over to the municipality. How do you manage to keep it in your hands now? Do not these firms lease their grounds from you?"

"I should have said 'we,' not 'I,'" replied Lord Barton. "We are all in partnership. It is a small co-operative commonwealth. The land is in the hands of trustees who are bound to keep it for its original purpose. Talking of co-operation, I should tell you that the farms pay well being worked on this plan. Instead of having rival farmers competing with one another, as we had, we have now one great business run upon one scientific plan. We have a growing trade with London in butter, milk, and eggs, and we supply all the needs of our colony into the bargain!"

"One more question, Lord Barton," said Sir Joscelyn. "Is your idea as a Socialist, that gradually others will adopt these plans until the whole country becomes co-operative?"

"Not exactly that," said Lord Barton. "Obviously this exact plan could not be adopted everywhere. Just to mention one point, our nearness to London is a great advantage which many other places would lack. But I think the agricultural problem could get far on towards solution if all landlords were to exercise more enterprise and originality in the management of their property and were not so narrow in their outlook. Believe me, Sir Joscelyn, a little imagination on the part of rich people would do more to solve our social problems than anything else in the world."

"I thought you believed in faith," said Sir Joscelyn.

"Well, imagination in a Christian is faith," replied Lord Barton.

"That was a fine saying of your Prime Minister, Sir Joscelyn, how he wanted to turn England from being the 'pleasure ground of the rich' into being the 'treasure house of the poor.' But I chiefly look for this from my experiment and similar ones. They will tend to create the communal idea in people's minds. Socialism will not then come as a shock, suddenly hurled at people by a triumphant majority in Parliament, but it will imperceptibly recommend itself to them as the natural way in which they would arrange their political and industrial affairs."

"And how do you manage about religion?" said Lady Spicebox. "Have you not about fifty sects all fighting one another?"

"That is a difficulty, no doubt," replied Barton. "I need not say that we do not force the Church religion upon any one. And I have learnt from Father John how to get on with the Nonconformists.

"We have an excellent parson who does a good work. We avoid the religious education squabbles by having no religion taught in the schools at all. We all agreed to

withdraw the children from State teaching. But in my little town hall, which you see yonder, we allow the various denominations to instruct each its own children twice a week. Even the Secularists and the 'moral instructionists' have their classes. The Socialists also have a class for young citizens, which is doing a grand work. It is remarkable that since we adopted this plan we have found out all sorts of ways of working together which we never thought possible while we were quarrelling. Our children meet together on all kinds of occasions. We have gymnasias, bands of hope, botany classes, with rambles in the spring and summer, wood-carving classes, and things of that kind, in which Church children and non-Church children mix, and nobody knows there is any difference."

"But," said Sir Joscelyn, "I thought you Christian Socialists made a great point of the Church religion and its special bearing on Socialism just because it is Church. If you mix them all up, does it not tend to blur the line and so defeat your main object?"

"No," said Barton; "I find that if you get Churchmen, Nonconformists, and Secularists to work together for a common object, they find out that they really agree on about ten more common objects than the particular one they are working for. We haven't time to quarrel about theology at Bartonville. All that is wanted is a little tact and a great deal of charity. Love conquers all. Of course, we are very definite with our own Church children. But the others like us all the better for that. They dislike jelly-fish Churchmanship much more than the 'High Church,' as they call it. We have all kinds of preachers here, but they much prefer old Father John to Canon Pixley. For one thing Pixley's sermons never convert anybody to anything, and we are great believers in conversion here."

"Really, Barty, Lord Haypence ought to secure you for an interview in the *Daily Postbox*," said Lady Spicebox. "You have told us everything."

"No," said Barton, "he should secure Sir Joscelyn as an interviewer. He has drawn it out of me with admirable dexterity. Now come to tea."

In a large marquee opposite the Convalescent Home the tea was laid. Vincent was seated next to Mrs. Vandertrust, and was calling her attention with delight to an animated conversation of a rather one-sided character going on between Mrs. Buttles and Kitty Barnes.

"I wish," he said, "you could get to know one of those old ladies. She was housekeeper to my father who, as you know, was a Secularist. She has a good heart and would make a good Christian were she not so entirely ignorant."

"Shall I ask her to stay with me here?" said Mrs. Vandertrust. "We could then talk it all over."

"A capital idea," said Vincent. "You and she, Mrs. Vandertrust, are already somewhat sadly connected in my mind. I was on my way to my father's death-bed when I read your letter. Kitty Barnes, that old lady, met me at the door when I had your letter in my hand."

"Your father was a good man, was he not?" said Mrs. Vandertrust.

"Yes," said Vincent thoughtfully, "he was a good man."

"How do you account for it," she went on, "that in the case of a man like your father he was able to do so much good without being a Christian? Could he have done much more if he had been one?"

"I think," said Vincent, "that is just a question which I, knowing him so well, could answer easily if I chose, but I would rather not."

"You mean that you would not like to say things about your dead father to a comparative stranger."

"Partly that. I think I can see, knowing what I do,

what a very much better man, even from the point of view of good works, which are only a small part of goodness, he could have been if he had been a Christian. Putting my father out of the question, don't you think, Mrs. Vandertrust, that our host, Lord Barton, is vastly better for being a Christian? Is there not an enormous difference between the way he does this work here and the way in which a mere philanthropist does his? I can imagine a non-religious, scientific man making a colony like this merely as a sociological experiment. But I am certain it would be a very different thing from Bartonville."

"That again," said Mrs. Vandertrust, "is where Christian Socialism is needed to soften and humanise mere economic Socialism."

"Exactly. State Socialism pure and simple could produce a comfortable colony of workhouses and barracks, but it requires a Lord Barton to produce a Bartonville."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Vandertrust, "that Lord Barton has been inspired by his religion to do all this."

"Entirely," replied Vincent. "Bartonville is the pure product of Christianity in a man. He was left an orphan when a boy. He came under the influence of John Ball. The grace of God worked in him, and this is the result. It is the fruit of the Spirit which is love."

"And if you lived here, Mr. Heathcote, as I do, you would know how this love has penetrated and softened the ordinary inhabitants. We don't, of course, claim to be a religious colony. There is no force exercised, and no interference allowed with anybody's beliefs, but there is an extraordinary unity of spirit pervading all who live and work here."

"I am told," said Vincent, "that you, too, have a great influence, and the people love you."

"I certainly love them."

"And that, too, you owe to Lord Barton."

"No, Mr. Heathcote," she said, "I owe it all to you."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE REVOLUTION

It's a tremendous time, isn't it?—a Day of the Lord—not yet the last, I fear : but the Kingdom of God seems to be coming fast, though the devil still plays a strong hand.—TOM HUGHES

ONCE again the relentless power of the Septennial Act had forced the country into a General Election. Never perhaps had there been so dark and uncertain a prospect before any party as that which lay before the Tories as they went to the poll. It was not that they feared the return of a majority of the old-fashioned Liberals. The small contingent of these who had been returned to the last Parliament had made their position even worse by their doings in the House during the past six years. But the Government were well aware that the country outside Westminster had changed its mind. The Labour Party and those who had followed Kesterton in his vigorous policy of social reforms had been carrying on an agitation throughout the length and breadth of the land for years. They had not gained adherents so much by attacking the Government as by placing before the people an attractive, well-considered programme of what might be done by any well-disposed Cabinet, with a majority at its back. They did not threaten a complete scheme of Socialism, but they proposed every conceivable kind of legislation which tended in that direction. They talked of "charters," the Charter of the Children, the Charter of the Women Workers, the Charter of the Un-

employed, the Charter of the Agricultural Labourer, the Charter of Temperance Reform.

It had caught on. Here was something definite at last. It was no mere negative policy of destroying the old Church, which was becoming more popular every day, or the House of Lords, which was rapidly destroying itself with the exception of the Barton clientele. It was a positive programme of Hope and Freedom. If it failed, England would be no worse off than before. The poor could hardly be poorer: the plight of the unemployed and the sweated workers could hardly be more piteously sad.

And if it succeeded, well, a new era would begin. The nation would revive and possess the land. There was no animosity against the rich as such. The bulk of them simply did not count in the national life. They seemed to the masses to be bent on pleasure. Let things go their way. The mass of the people intended to strike for a new social life of which it dreamed. Added to this there were a large number of candidates of the educated class who frankly gave their adhesion to Kesterton's programme, though preferring not to call themselves Labour men. Of such Vincent Heathcote used to say in after years that he counted no less than forty who had been members of his Thursday conferences. Churchpeople in all parts of the country followed Kesterton, who had become a kind of idol in their eyes. Even the *Ecclesiastical Times* departed from its usual non-committal attitude and boldly advised its readers to vote for him.

The die was cast. Old-fashioned people sat and rubbed their eyes as they read the morning and evening newspapers and became aware that the surprises of 1906 were as nothing beside this that was going on as the returns came in. There could be no doubt about it. There would be a Labour Government or something like it.

. . . . .

It was in the midst of this epoch-making period that the bishops of the Church of England held one of their private meetings at Lambeth Palace, which are the modern substitute for the ancient synods. Their lordships were in a good humour, for though the advent of a Labour Government was not quite to the taste of many of them, yet the *débâcle* of the old Liberalism with its Disestablishment and Disendowment cry was particularly gratifying to them all. They were pleased too at the prominent part taken by Churchmen in the revolution. Though many could not "see eye to eye," as they put it, with Mr. Kesterton and Lord Barton, yet they felt proud to think that these two great men, who were making the England of the future, were both loyal sons of the Church.

The business before the meeting was a little irritating to these Fathers in God, who were bursting to talk politics and speculate on the probable personnel of the new Cabinet. First, there were proposals concerning the ornaments rubric to be placed before Convocation. Should the clergy wear linen vestments or silk? A grave subject this to discuss, while the destinies of the Empire were in the melting-pot! It is only fair to our Fathers in God to say that, excepting one or two of them, they were heartily sick of the question, and would willingly have discussed some social problem of pressing importance. But unfortunately the ritual controversy was still alive, and they were obliged to do their best to bring Churchmen into agreement, so that as one united body they might go forth to combat real national evils.

The debate dragged wearily on. My lord of Barchester, the last of the old-fashioned prelates, was of opinion that if any vestments were worn at all the nation would be punished by a pestilence from Heaven. He was not at all sure that the Labour majority at the recent election is not connected with the proposal.



"These two men," he said, "whom many of your lordships, to my great regret, seem to delight to honour, Lord Barton and Mr. Kesterton, are, I am told, in the habit of attending churches where these dresses are worn by so-called Protestant ministers. Can we be surprised that having accustomed themselves to look upon such abominations they think nothing of upsetting all law and order in our dear Protestant country?"

The Bishop of Brighton, on the other hand, a Broad Churchman, who, oddly enough, considered himself a successor of Frederic Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, said that he saw no harm in linen. Silk, he feared, was symbolical of Popery, but plain white linen was quite harmless. There were some people who thought him a ritualist. He assured his brethren he was nothing of the kind. It was the glory of their dear Church of England to be able to include men like himself and men like the Bishop of Barchester in one comprehensive communion. He would suggest that linen be permitted, but that if a clergyman preferred it, he should be allowed to wear nothing to distinguish him from his Christian brethren.

All the bishops laughed at this last sentence, but his lordship of Brighton could not for the life of him understand why.

After an hour's discussion of this fruitful subject, upon which for the twentieth time no conclusion was arrived at, the Primate read out some complaints he had received of illegal proceedings in the diocese of Swampton. The first letter was signed by Sir Martyn and Lady Loafer. They had been on a motor tour round the country, and they wished to call the attention of the bishops to the hideous doings of certain clergymen in the diocese of Swampton. Swampton itself, they said, was comparatively free from anything objectionable from a Church point of

view. The cathedral, of course, was beyond suspicion. The congregation in the parish church was small but earnest. The clergyman wore a black gown in the pulpit, and that of itself was a proof that he was doing good Christian work. But in the neighbourhood of Swampton there were several objectionable places. There was a "monastery" called Fenwick, where the "brothers," as they were styled, a word unknown to the Protestant Church, said Romish prayers every day which were not in the Prayer Book. They also held Romish retreats. It was significant as showing the signs of the times that some of the Socialist party attended these retreats. This Lady Loafer had found out from a telegraph boy, who had quite justifiably read a telegram which he had had to deliver at the monastery.

At another church in the diocese, in the village of Greenside, to wit, a clergyman was said to bring a cow into church at the harvest festival as an emblem of Peace and Plenty.

Sir Martyn Loafer was told this by the widow of the ex-churchwarden. She was a little deaf, and she may have heard her husband say that there was a *row* in the church, but Sir Martyn thinks it must have been a *cow*, because he has heard of such things being done in Catholic churches on the Continent.

Suffice it to say that with the exception of the Bishop of Barchester their lordships did not take these complaints very seriously; in fact, the Bishop of London laughed outright and the Primate could scarcely resist a smile. It was difficult, too, to say much about the Fenwick complaints after the Bishop of Caldey Island had confessed that he himself regularly attended the "Romish retreats" every year.

"But what does the Bishop of Swampton say himself?" said the Bishop of Barchester.

"I am afraid, my brothers," said the Primate, "that our good Bishop of Swampton will never be able to answer that question. He is lying dangerously ill. This is the more sad for the Church at the present political juncture because, as your lordships know, he was one who, by his sympathies with Christian Socialism, I say emphatically *Christian* Socialism, would have done immense service to us all at this crisis in our national history."

"My brothers," said the Bishop of London, "His Grace's mention of Christian Socialism gives me the cue to rise and say how much I deplore that we should have to waste our time wrangling over these ceremonial questions. You have heard of the work that has been done by one of the clergy of my diocese, Mr. Vincent Heathcote. You know, too, how intimately he is associated with Mr. Kesterton and Lord Barton. Does not the present political outlook seem to be calling us to a great effort to combine Religion and Social Reform? Let us do what we can to back up these men and win the nation back to Christ."

"Excuse me, your Grace," said the Bishop of Brighton, entering the room in a great hurry, his face flushed with excitement, "I am sure you will wish at once to see the evening paper, or, if you will permit me, I will read to the meeting two pieces of news of the utmost interest and importance."

The Primate nodded assent, and amid breathless silence he read out these words:—

"We deeply regret to have to inform our readers that the Right Reverend Dr. Lestrange, Bishop of Swampton, passed away this morning. He was one of the most rightly revered bishops of the Church of England, being well known for his advocacy of well-considered social reforms. The news is of special interest at this time, for the appointment of his successor will of course rest with

the new Government, the late Prime Minister having resigned office yesterday."

"The other news," said the Bishop of Brighton, trembling with suppressed emotion, "is this, that the King has sent for Mr. Kesterton."

## CHAPTER XII

### TWO LETTERS

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

TENNYSON

VINCENT was staying at the little cottage which Lord Barton kept for himself and friends at Bartonville. He was expecting his friend in at any moment as he sat in an arm-chair communing with himself.

What was the subject of his thoughts?

"Politics," you will say, of course. Kesterton's Cabinet? Barton's place in it? Bunks' place? The next article in *Vox* on the Dawn of the New Era?

All wrong, dear reader. He is thinking of none of these things. He is in love! You have not suspected this before. No, of course not, for Vincent himself has only known it for three weeks. While the outside world was supposing, if it supposed at all, that the notorious Mr. Heathcote was gloating over the election returns and smacking his lips and rubbing his hands at the exhilarating news of victories which he had been largely instrumental in winning, our friend was all the time being conquered himself by that sly little boy called Cupid.

Yes, in his quiet way he had been making love, chiefly by letter, to Cissy Vandertrust.

She had loved him for a long time, but he had been

slow to perceive it. Her change of life had been entirely due to his teaching which she had either heard or heard about. The visit to Alabaster at that eventful Christmas-tide had bred a holy discontent within her mind even before she had married Mr. Vandertrust. As she wrote the letter to Vincent on the last night of the Mission, in the presence of her husband's dead body, she became aware that admiration for the teacher was already changing into love for the man. On his side, perhaps, it was the conversation they had at the Bartonville garden party which had first awakened in him the germs of affection. He, too, had admired before he loved. Her life among the colonists in that Surrey paradise, so different from the aimless, artificial existence of Dukery Square to which she had been used, the gentle, tender behaviour of the young widow among this quite new set of companions, made her to Vincent, with his knowledge of the average character of the Smart Set, little short of a heroine. And then with him, too, this had ripened into love.

He had asked her with all reverence and humility to be his wife.

It had been a difficult business to arrange. There was no doubt about the love. The money was the obstacle, and that not because, as in most cases of curate matrimony, there was too little, but because there was too much, and it came from an evil source. Vincent was resolved that he would not allow himself to benefit directly by one penny of the Vandertrust fortune. To do so would be to stultify most of what he had said over and over again in the pages of the *Vox* and the pulpit in Dukery Square. Cissy must be willing to live on the parson's salary together with her own little fortune which her father, who was a respectable head clerk in a Government office, would give her, or Vincent would have to break off the negotiations. He had not told her this. He

had left it entirely to her to make a voluntary surrender. He was sure she would make it, and she did.

The letter he held in his hand was not merely the acceptance of his proposal, it contained the written promise to make what was probably one of the greatest sacrifices offered by a Christian woman since the Middle Ages. She of her abundance cast in all that she had. Nobody knew of it except Vincent. It was ten years or more before even Father John thought he had solved the riddle by the discovery of an old American newspaper containing particulars of a "gigantic windfall for Chicago charities."

"People will say nasty things," said Vincent to himself. "The Duchess of Derwentwater will wag her head and Lady Loafer her tongue. But what does it matter? I'm used to nasty things. And there are plenty of nice things to counterbalance them. And this is one," he said as he kissed the letter and wetted it with a tear of gratitude to God.

"Oh my!" he said, suddenly recovering himself, "there's another nasty thing, I shall have to tell my mother-in-law not to . . . Poor dear! It is almost too late for her to stop it. Now, there's another deficiency in my Fenwick education. They never told me what to say to a mother-in-law who isn't content with the complexion God has given her! Well, I dare say I shall find out by the light of nature.

"I won't have a fashionable wedding. I leave such ritualism as that to Lady Loafer. No, we'll be married at St. Martin's in a Christian way. The wedding to begin with. Then the Lord's Supper. Then a real wedding breakfast prepared not by Gunter but by Mrs. Buttles. I must give Aunt Kittens a new gown.

"Who shall be my best man? Why the Prime Minister of course! Or Barty? Or Spikes?

"And Lady Spy—what will she be? She can't be bridesmaid. She might give me away. I expect she'll say I'm giving myself away. Besides, I forgot, it's the bride who is given away. Dear, oh dear! How jolly happy I am! Hullo, Barty! Here you are at last. I say, Barty, I've got it."

"What? Has he written?"

"He? No, *she*."

"What do you mean?"

"She says, yes."

"My dear Vinney, I congratulate you. I knew she would. My dear old boy, this is delightful. I thought it was something else. But never mind. This is better still."

"What are you driving at?"

"Oh, all right. So you are going to be married. That's splendid news."

"You seem rather excited yourself, Barty. Look here, Barty. What is it? Were you in love with Cissy yourself?"

"Good gracious, no."

"Don't say 'good gracious,' as if it were an awful thing if you had been."

"No, I didn't mean that."

"Then you think her too rich?"

"Well, I don't say too rich; but, of course, people will talk, you know."

"Of course they will. Let them talk."

"Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" said Lord Barton.

"Barty, I know there's something you're keeping from me. You're not yourself this afternoon. Oh, now I know what it is. Kesterton has offered you a place in the Cabinet."

"No, that's not it, at least, yes, it is."

"What place has he offered you?"

"The Local Government Board."

"Ah, now we have it. Now it's my turn to congratu-



late you, which I do with all my heart. I say, Barty, we shall give you no peace now about the unemployed. I must go and write about it for the *Vox*. Oh dear! I wish *Vox* was at the bottom of the sea till after my honeymoon."

"I have made Spikes my secretary," said Barton.

"That's good. Have you got anything for Sugarstick and Morning Star?"

"Kesterton will see to them, or Bunks. He goes to the Home Office."

"My dear Barty, the country's going to be governed by *Vox*! We may as well give up Yeast Lodge, and have the meetings of the staff in Downing Street."

Vincent was beginning to snort like an old warhorse. For the first time for three weeks Socialism was beginning to interest him again. It came on him like a perspiration.

"I say, Barty, what will he do about the Foreign Office and the War Office and the Admiralty? He'll have to keep the N.S.L. men out of them. The country wouldn't stand them. There'd be a reaction."

"Well, I mustn't say because my lips are sealed, but you can take it from me that it will be all right. Thanks to you, we've got some quite respectable men in the House of Commons. Look here, Vinney, has the post come in?"

"No," said Vincent. "Do you expect some letters? Here's the postman coming up the walk."

Barton ran away to the corner of the room and began fanning himself with his handkerchief. He felt as if he had done something naughty, and was now going to be found out.

There was only one letter, and it was marked "Official. Paid."

It was for Vincent. He opened it casually, thinking

it was a demand for income tax. Then he turned white, and nearly dropped it.

"So this explains your agitation, Barty. You knew this was coming. You thought it had come already. Barty, I ought to read this on my knees. Oh, what shall I say? It's impossible! Impossible! Here, Barty! read it out to me. I think I must be dreaming."

"No, Vinney, you're not dreaming. It is written on plain white paper and in good black ink. Sit down while I read it to you."

It was from the Prime Minister, and read thus :—

"MY DEAREST VINCENT,

"I want you to do me a great kindness, which will also, I am sure, be for the benefit of the Church at large.

"Will you let me recommend you to His Majesty for the see of Swampton, now vacant by the death of our old friend, Dr. Lestrangle? No doubt such an appointment will startle some people. You are only just thirty, which is the youngest age possible for a bishop. You hold no benefice either. But things are changing in England just now, and it is certainly no more revolutionary for you to be a bishop than for such as I to be Prime Minister. It would be a terrible disappointment to me if you refused. Of course you will speak to none but Barton about this until I have written to the King.

"Praying that the blessed Spirit will guide you aright,

"Your ever affectionate friend,

"JACK KESTERTON.

"P.S.—On second thoughts, I do not mind your consulting Father John or the Fenwick people. But not Lady S——, please!"

Two such letters as those which Vincent had received within an hour would have upset the equilibrium of most

people. But in some ways the Prime Minister's communication was less disturbing than the message which Spikes had brought to Fenwick offering him the editorship of *Vox*. Not that Vincent had for a moment anticipated such an offer as he had just received, but because the *Vox* seemed, curious as it may sound, to open out a greater vision even than the episcopal throne of Swampton. Perhaps if he had remembered that in a few years it would mean his entry into the House of Lords, where he would be able to stand side by side with the Government in the great fight, he would have felt differently. Moreover, in the case of the editorship he had really wished for it without thinking it likely he would get it. There was in that case the additional surprise of getting what he wanted which is always exciting.

A bishopric was something so entirely strange that the offer overwhelmed without exciting him. He could not fancy himself at all as a bishop. The thought of the dean and canons, the presentation at Court, the charges to the clergy, the confirmations, the ordinations, the costume! It was crushing. Lord Barton, on the other hand, who had mixed up with *episcopalia* all his life as an ecclesiastical layman, who had tasted the boiled mutton and lemonade of the Palace, so to speak, from his youth up, knew exactly what it involved. He had trembled a little at the idea when the Prime Minister first mooted it, but two or three hours' consideration had acclimatised him and he was full of anticipations.

He restrained himself, however, and left Vincent alone to pray, telling him that he would help him all he could to come to a right decision and offering to accompany him to Limehouse if he wished to go that night.

But in this case Vincent seemed not to wish to consult his friends. It seemed to him somehow a matter between himself and God. He just prayed all night as he had

done before the London Mission and then wrote to Kesterton accepting the offer.

It is doubtful if there had ever been a piece of ecclesiastical news which created more comment than the appointment of the new Bishop of Swampton.

Spikes was the only person in the United Kingdom who expected it. The moment he had read in the papers that Kesterton had got a bishopric to give away he had said to Mrs. Rednal:—

“He'll give it to Vincent Heathcote.”

Father John in his boisterous way nearly embraced Mrs. Buttles, “which as how the Farver seemed to have gone orf 'is 'ead as a poor girl in my late 'usband's time as were carried to the asylum as were put in the padded room, and all because Brother Vinney's to be a lord as 'e well deserves it as the Farver hisself ought to be one too!”

The circulation of the *Vox* leaped up to a quarter of a million in a week. The N.S.L. head-quarters were besieged by interviewers, but the officials sniffed a little and thought that the Prime Minister was a bit too much in with the parsons to please them.

Claude Smilepeace beamed in the pulpit and made an appropriate reference to the fact that St. Silas' Church had been honoured by the remarkable and most gratifying appointment that had been made to the see of Swampton.

Sir Martyn and Lady Loafer were in despair at the thought that the cow would certainly be allowed to walk round Greenside Church at the harvest festival and would perhaps be introduced into the cathedral of the diocese.

Lord Swampshire wondered whether he had not better visit his “rookeries” at once for fear the new Bishop should get there first and proceed to denounce him in the cathedral.

Mr. Jameson resolved to write immediately to Brother



Mark to ask if he had told Vincent that he had called him a whipper-snapper and to promise £5 towards Fenwick College if the Brother would apologise for him to the new prelate before the enthronement.

Lady Spicebox could eat no breakfast till she had scrambled up to her boudoir and penned the following letter to her beloved Vinney:—

“MY DEAREST LORD BISHOP-ELECT,

“I cannot tell you with what delight I read in to-day's paper of your appointment. Coming on the top of dear Barty's seat in the Cabinet and all that I am mad with joy. Even Jossy's quite interested and all that. Oh, Vinney, you must let me make you a cope. I have had lessons at Helbronner's lately, and I'm rather good, at least, if you give me time. Shall you give up the *Vox*? I suppose so. And we shall lose you from St. Silas'. Still we're not far from Swampton when we are at Alabaster. Oh *do* shake up that horrid old town. What *will* Lord Swampshire say? He'll have to put his slums in order now. And that wretched old vicar and those silly old canons. You must prohibit them and all that. It's such a dirty palace. Do let me come and furnish it for you. And will you make Mrs. Kittens your housekeeper? When that stupid Dean dies you must get Father John appointed. Shall I make your cope in red? I might work ‘Hurrah for Socialism!’ on the burse or morse, or whatever they call it.

“Yours always affectionately,

“GLADYS SPY.

“P.S.—Now just as I finished this Mrs. Market Hatcham has come in to tell me another piece of news. Fie! Fie! my lord. What a day we are having! I say, Vinney, you'll be as rich as Cræsus. But I suppose you will give it away and all that.”

## CHAPTER XIII

### GOD BE WITH YOU

Till Love and Joy look round and call the Earth their own.

COLERIDGE

Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men?

I will so do, by the help of God.—*The Consecration of Bishops*

WE take leave of our friends on Vincent's wedding day. Since that evening when the poll was declared there had never been such a multitude in the streets around Gehazi's Rents. Tickets for the little church would have commanded such a price had they been for sale as would have kept all St. Martin's Mission charities in clover for twenty years. It was known that the Prime Minister was to be present and half a dozen Cabinet Ministers, to say nothing of Under-Secretaries and Bishops. The earnest entreaty of the Primate of All England had failed to induce Vincent to move the wedding to Limehouse Church.

"This is where I found God," he said; "this is where I will wed my bride."

He so far surrendered to pressure as to have the reception after breakfast in the Town Hall.

The party which assembled there was, we should think, unique in the annals of society. Bishops, clergy, and statesmen rubbed up against dockers and their wives. Smart ladies from Dukery Square found themselves

chatting happily with red Socialists and weird-looking gentlemen of the Tolstoyite school who fed on vegetable roots and non-alcoholic cider. The Brothers from Fenwick and the Friars from Plaistow mingled with the compositors of the *Vox* and the canons of Swampton.

Mrs. Buttles in dark blue plush with a lace bib was outshone only by Aunt Kittens in lavender silk and a dead-gold *fichu*.

Mrs. Market Hatcham was radiant in what "Corrie" would call a picture-dress of emerald taffeta and a coat of cloud grey of diaphanous material. She received the congratulations of her friends with a middle-aged smirk, informing them under her breath that she believed Vincent was distantly connected with the Heathcotes of Gloucestershire. Secretly she was more than contented at her daughter's second wedding. She was glad to be rid of the smell of sausages which had surrounded the first, and proud that her son-in-law would at least be called "My Lord." Besides, he was very good-looking, and people talked about him in society. What more could be wanted? As for money there was, she supposed, plenty of that, and he had not as yet examined her upon the subject of her complexion.

Sir James Hornby looked a little gloomy as he conversed in a corner of the hall with Canon Pixley about the turn of tide in politics and the line which the Labour Party would be likely to take about the Athanasian Creed.

Canon Trefusis reassured Sir Martyn concerning the cow, and told him that the coming Bishop, though a High Churchman and, worse still, a Socialist, was, he thought, a converted man. "No doubt," said the Canon, "he will get over some of his eccentricities now. The very fact that he is marrying Vandertrust's fortune shows that he must have toned down or, shall I say, up a little."



"Still, I think it a deplorable appointment," said Sir Martyn. "It looks as if Protestants would fare no better under the new Government than under the old ones."

"But ought we not to be thankful, Sir Martyn, that at least we shall not be disestablished and disendowed?"

"What's the good of an Established Church if it isn't Protestant?" growled the baronet.

"None, that I can see," said Canon Trefusis. "But these Christian Socialists have got some idea of combining what they call the 'Catholic Church' and a new reformed society in which everybody will love one another and be just to one another. Of course it's absurdly chimerical."

"It's all nonsense," said Sir Martyn. "You see, it's all founded on a wrong basis to begin with. Catholic Church, indeed! Why, I don't believe in the 'Catholic Faith'!"

"Which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved," said Lady Spicebox, coming up behind him.

Of all the stars that glittered in Limehouse Town Hall that day none could outshine our little Socialist from Dukery Square. She shimmered all over with silver sequins, the glory of which was but a reflection of the rays of triumphant joy which shot out from her sparkling eyes. She was revelling in the sunshine of complete and victorious satisfaction. All that she had fought for with her tiny bow and arrows, as she had flitted about from west to east and east to west, she seemed now to have won. It was "her own Jack" who was now at the head of the table in Downing Street: it was "her dear Barty" who was at the Local Government Board: it was "her sweet old Bunks" who controlled the Home Office: it was "her beloved Vinney" who was my Lord-elect of Swampton. Yet even this was not all.

Kesterton with a generous thoughtfulness that was characteristic of him had offered Sir Joscelyn a peerage



as a reward for his long services to his party, and it was as the Countess-designate of Alabaster that the little lady danced about among the throng.

"Of course, I don't care a bit about the title and all that, you know," she said to the Duchess of Derwentwater. "But Jossy likes it. It pleases him and doesn't hurt me. And he thoroughly deserves it, seeing that he has subscribed to the Liberal Party for years and years, and they've never done anything for him. Wasn't it kind of Jack? I believe he meant it for me. Of course, you know, I do belong to his party and all that."

"Yes, I see," said the Duchess rather icily. "By the way, Lady Spy (forgive me for calling you by your old name), I thought you Socialists did not like all this worldly show. It's much too smart for your principles."

"Not at all," said Lady Spy, "we want everybody to be able to have parties like this. That's why we've got all these dockers and people mixed up with the smart folk. When the revolution's accomplished, this sort of thing will be quite common."

"Yes, I see," said the Duchess, still more icily.

But the best of things have an ending, and Vincent was not sorry when the reception wore itself out. The motors and the trams carted off the guests, and in comparative quiet the little band of friends once more assembled in the Mission House, this time to say farewell to the bride and bridegroom.

"So you've given up *Vox*," said Barton.

"Yes," replied Vincent, "except as an occasional writer. Spikes is to be the new editor, and he will do it grandly. Did you read his article on my appointment?"

"Yes; it's the most perfect exposition of our principles I have ever read. It ought to be printed as a tract and sent to all the Socialist clubs."

"Still better to all the Communicants' guilds of the

Church of England," said Vincent. "I shall scatter it broadcast over my diocese."

"Who's to preach at the Consecration, Vinney?" said the Prime Minister.

"Need you ask, Jack? There he stands. John Ball, 'the mad priest'!"

"The Archbishop seems pleased," said Barton.

"Nobody has been kinder to me than he," said Vincent, "unless it is the Bishop of London. I have a message for you, Jack, from him."

They went aside to converse for a few minutes.

"The bishops are behaving like bricks," said Barton. "I believe we shall see our dream realised, and they will lead the people on to freedom."

"It looks like it," said Father John. "There'll be an earthquake up in Swampton before I'm a year older. You mark my words."

"Imagine Vincent's Primary Charge to his diocese!" said Barton.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade won't be in it!" said Ball.

"You mean, I suppose," said Barton, "that the 'canons,' instead of being to the right and left, will be scattered all over the field."

"Instead of remonstrances with naughty parsons about incense, we shall have fulminations against the sweaters of Swampton," said Spikes.

"Instead of Lord Swampshire being asked to represent the diocese in the Laymen's House of Convocation, he will be excommunicated until he pulls down his slums," said Father John.

"Picture to yourself the Bishop," said Barton, "preaching in the market-place when the potters are on strike!"

"Or speaking in the House of Lords when the Poisonous Trades Bill is before Parliament," said Spikes.

"Or bringing in the new Charter himself," said Ball.

"Stephen Langton redivivus," said Barton.

"Or St. Wistan," said Lady Spy, "the man at Bristol who set free the slaves and all that."

"He'll turn the world upside down," said Father John.

"He won't be the first apostle who has done that," said the Superior of Fenwick.

"How proud you must be of your first Fenwick bishop," said Lady Spicebox.

"Yes," said the Superior; "of course he wasn't a regular Brother, you know, but we trained him at our college. But we divide the honours with St. Martin's Mission."

"And the Prime Minister," said Ball.

"We have all had a share in it, haven't we?" said Spikes. "I think I must put a word in for the old *Vox*."

"And even me?" asked Lady Spy.

"And Mrs. Buttles," said Father John. "Which as how——"

"No, you don't," said Vincent, coming back at this moment with Jack and his bride.

For a description of the dress in which Mrs. Heathcote "went away" to Alabaster Court, our readers are referred to "Corrie" in the next week's *Chit-Chat*.

We can only give you what Vincent said to the assembled company in parting.

"Friends," he said, "we must be going now. My heart is too full to say much more than just good-bye.

"As I look at this little room at dear St. Martin's Mission House I remember many great decisions which I have made in it. Can I do better than thank you, my good friends, for all the help you have given me in making them?"

"I go out now to begin another chapter in the story of my life, taking with me for the first time a dear panion. She has not been associated with us long

Barty here knows what her worth is in the great cause by what she has already done through her life at Bartonville. She has just told me, my friends, of another stone that she herself has laid in the building we are being allowed by God to raise.

“Through her prayers and her loving persuasion the first one, please God, upon whom I shall lay my hands in confirmation will be Katherine Barnes.

“Thus the old Chartist movement and the new are linked in one, and God’s Spirit blesses the union.

“God be with you till we meet again ;  
Keep Love’s banner floating o’er you,  
Smite Death’s threatening wave before you :  
God be with you till we meet again.”

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
General Literature, . . .	2-30	Little Galleries, . . .	27
Ancient Cities, . . .	20	Little Guides, . . .	27
Antiquary's Books, . . .	20	Little Library, . . .	27
Arden Shakespeare, . . .	20	Little Quarto Shakespeare, . . .	29
Beginner's Books, . . .	21	Miniature Library, . . .	29
Business Books, . . .	21	Oxford Biographies, . . .	29
Byzantine Texts, . . .	21	School Examination Series, . . .	29
Churchman's Bible, . . .	22	School Histories, . . .	30
Churchman's Library, . . .	22	Textbooks of Science, . . .	30
Classical Translations, . . .	22	Simplified French Texts, . . .	30
Classics of Art, . . .	23	Standard Library, . . .	30
Commercial Series, . . .	23	Textbooks of Technology, . . .	31
Connoisseur's Library, . . .	23	Handbooks of Theology, . . .	31
Library of Devotion, . . .	23	Westminster Commentaries, . . .	32
Illustrated Pocket Library of Plain and Coloured Books, . . .	24		
Junior Examination Series, . . .	25	Fiction, . . . . .	32-37
Junior School-Books, . . .	26	The Shilling Novels, . . .	37
Leaders of Religion, . . .	26	Books for Boys and Girls, . . .	39
Little Blue Books, . . .	26	Novels of Alexandre Dumas, . . .	39
Little Books on Art, . . .	26	Methuen's Sixpenny Books, . . .	39

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